

## Window on Jordan

# Waking up to your horoscope

By Ibtisam Awadat  
Special to The Star

FOR MANY, reading their horoscope has long become a staple diet. People love to know what the future holds for them. While they may not believe it, they still like to read what's in store for their sign.

Each morning Samir rushes out of his house to the shop to buy a newspaper, and goes straight for one particular page: the one that has the horoscope.

"I started reading my horoscope long ago in the school library, actually. I only went there expressly for this purpose," said Samir, a 15-year-old student whose ambition is to become a doctor.

"Unfortunately, the school's administration received complaints from other students who used the library about the noise my friends and I used to make in fighting to read our own horoscopes."

So, what's the reason behind this passion?

"It really lifts my spirits. Optimistic news makes me happy for the rest of the day," Samir said.

While many people consider "horoscopes," or "what the stars say," as a pleasant sort of diversion, others seem almost obsessed with reading the stuff—and they take every single word as fact.

"People say that women are more anxious to know what is going to happen," said Hanan Ahmad, 20, a student in the University of Jordan.

"I myself believe that no one has the ability to predict for certain what is going to happen. It's nonsense," Hanna added.

But people continue to read what the future may bring their way. "When I was 25, I was more into reading my horoscope, but today, 15 years later, my interest is fading," said Issam Mustafa, an electrical engineer at the Royal Scientific Society (RSS).

"I haven't completely stopped, but now I tend to read books which discuss scientifically the changes in my horoscope together with the characteristics

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# The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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AMMAN, 7-13 MAY 1998. VOLUME 8, NUMBER 48. 350 FILS

## Iraqi ingenuity lessens effects of sanctions

By Doug Struck

UMM QASR, Iraq—Four ships are moored to the docks here. Australian wheat pours from the holds of the Jessica into trucks on the pier. Another 40,000 tons of wheat, this from America, awaits in the hold of the Aral, while cranes hoist laundry powder from the Thor, Sun, and chicken feed from the Dubai Orient.

"You see?" said Ali Nasser, the unloading manager for Iraq's main port. "The Iraqi people are not dead yet. We are alive and working."

Iraq has found ways to survive, despite years of stiff economic sanctions that were extended last week by the UN Security Council.

The sanctions have ground hard at Iraq. The once-large middle class has been stripped of its wealth and position. Fixed salaries are almost worthless. Engineers and doctors are driving taxis, and plotting to flee the country.

The infrastructure is a wobbly patchwork: investment has stopped, crime has risen and thousands of the weakest Iraqis—children and the sick—have died early, according to the World Health Organization.

But the embargo has not brought Iraq, or its government, to collapse. The country has reached a bedrock existence, surviving on legal imports of food, smuggled trade for oil and everyday ingenuity.

Muayad Abdul Amir, 35, used to be a construction worker. Now he rows a boat for an hour to reach grassy wetlands of the Shatt al Arab waterway where he plunges into the water and cuts off long reeds that he piles on his boat for the return trip.

Once ashore, he will sell his cargo to Sand Nassif, 50, who used to import fish from Bahrain. Nassif now uses his old

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# Albright presses Netanyahu to accept US plan

By Star Staff Writers and Agencies

LONDON—The Clinton administration committed itself Tuesday to a new course of diplomatic pressure on Israel, extending invitations to a White House summit meeting Monday on condition that Israel accept a package of US peace proposals it has rejected resolutely until now.

The invitation to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made public at a news conference by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, amounted to a six-day deadline for Netanyahu to disengage himself from positions he described as "irrevocable."

Tuesday as essential to Israel's security.

The declared purpose of the Washington summit, to be hosted by President Clinton on 11 May, would be to open the final chapter of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. The sides are now four years into a contemplated five-year working period intended to lead to permanent resolution of their conflict, and they are long past due to begin bargaining on such core issues as Palestinian statehood, borders, refugees and the status of occupied Jerusalem.

Before they can begin that, Israelis and Palestinians must break a 14-month stalemate on issues ostensibly solved by interim agreements in 1994

and 1995. The Clinton administration has drafted proposals combining new Palestinian security measures with Israeli troop withdrawals from an additional 13 percent of the West Bank, occupied by Israel in 1967, but Netanyahu has argued he cannot safely relinquish that much land.

Albright's announcement followed failure of her mediation efforts here and two telephone conversations each with Clinton and Vice President Gore. It reflected a longstanding US loss of patience with Netanyahu and a belief by policy makers that the peace-making effort between Israelis and Palestinians is falling apart.

"We have a strategic opportunity to put the peace process back on track," Albright said. "We cannot afford to lose it."

Polite and even amiable, Albright's performance avoided drama by design but broke substantial new ground. It marked the first public exhortation of progress that did not place equal onus on the parties, the first forthright statement that Arafat agreed to Washington's terms and Netanyahu did not, the first flat assertion that the American ideas "do not threaten Israeli security," and the first approach to "re-examine our approach to the peace process."

US officials had said some of this before in diplomatic contacts and comments made to reporters on condition of anonymity. But Netanyahu sought to deter any frank public statement of US differences with his government by mobilizing American Jews, Christian fundamentalists and friends of Israel in Congress.

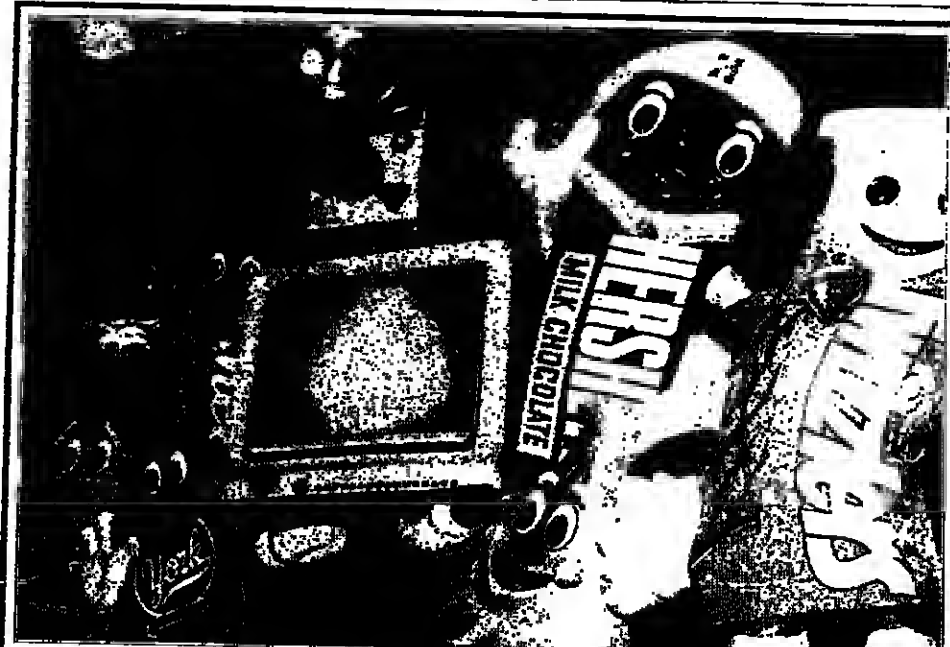
The Albright remarks signaled a hardening of US proposals—described euphemistically as "ideas"—that have been described by spokesmen until now as undergoing constant refinement.

The invitation to the Washington meeting is on the basis of those ideas and watering them down is not in the works," Albright said.

Confrontation with Israel, should Netanyahu decide to resist, could prove costly for Clinton and especially for Gore, who does not wish to alienate Jewish contributors or voters in his expected presidential campaign. Netanyahu has demonstrated often, most recently when British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook insisted on visiting the controversial Jewish housing development of Jabotinsky in Arab Jerusalem, that he knows how to embarrass foreign leaders who challenge him.

After hearing Albright's public remarks, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organiza-

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TRAVEL HERSHEY: These little guys surround a camera and a screen at the end of the Chocolate World ride that takes the guests' photos. The photos are then sold at the end of the ride. photo by Denise Sanchez

## Initiation of 'driving ethics' Point system aims to reduce traffic mishaps

By Ilham Sadeq

Star Staff Writer

CAR ACCIDENTS have been rising at an alarming rate in the last couple of years. Loss of human life on our roads is tragic and inexcusable, and the rising costs of personal injury and property damage that result from highway mishaps are an increasing burden to society as well as to the individuals involved.

In response to the rise in the number of serious accidents, the traffic control authorities have come up with a new plan to encourage safer road habits.

Starting on 1 April, the Traffic Directorate embarked on a new system they hope will deter careless driving by initiating an innovative traffic rules system through which to effect a "traffic ethic" on Jordanian highways.

Colonel Adnan Al Shamayleh, chief of the Traffic Directorate, says that "the introduction of the points system" is intended to make the roads safe and secure for both drivers and pedestrians. He points out that "it is built on detailed studies of the causes of car accidents, in cooperation with international authorities that now use similar systems."

The points' system covers 33 different traffic violations which were seen by the Directo-



Maybe the new system will reduce car accidents!

rate team as being the most common among Jordanian drivers. The simplest violation—such as not using a safety belt when driving—is given only one penalty point. But the points add up more quickly than you might think.

"When a driver collects 11 points, he is given a notice by the Directorate, which also offers him a chance to reduce his total by four points if he joins a two-day training course at the Jordan Traffic Institute or another rehabilitation center chosen by the Directorate," Al Shamayleh explains.

"The first grade violations—such as driving without a license, or under the influence

of alcohol or drugs, hitting a pedestrian and running away without informing the police, going through a red light, or putting a forged number-plate on the car—were intentionally given four points," Colonel Al Shamayleh elaborates.

There are 13 violations included in this first criterion. But the new system doesn't mean that the driver who violates the traffic law doesn't pay the usual fine.

Colonel Al Shamayleh adds that the old procedure for paying traffic fines continues, but that data on each violation—all of which are given a certain number of points, depending on their seriousness—is processed by computer to guarantee the system's accuracy. The Directorate also contacts all drivers in violation and informs them of the total points they have built up.

In this way, the driver is given an opportunity to change his/her conduct and reduce his/her number of points.

"If the point number reaches 12, the driver's license is taken away for two months; if it reaches 16, the period is extended to four months," Colonel Al Shamayleh explains.

Drivers who continue violating the law and register 20 points, will be deprived of their right to drive for six months, and, if the points are over 30, then the license may be taken away for a full year.

Referring to the accuracy of this system, Colonel Al Shamayleh points out that the Directorate has done its utmost to find eye witnesses to confirm that the driver has committed a violation. These witnesses could include private citizens, police

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# Weaving a new way through life

By Michael Church

THEY GLOW from the walls of Middle Eastern banks and hotels: American museums queue to acquire them. What Gobein was to 17th-century France, Wissa Wassef is to today's potentates. If the name is strange, so is this tapestry's origin, yet anyone may track it to its source.

As you travel west through Cairo's suburbs, the landscape is quintessentially picturesque—brightly clad peasants toiling in the fields, oxen making slow progress under the palms. But it is also a vicious poverty trap: this is where fundamentalism seeks its recruits.

In the village of Harrania, in the shadow of the pyramids, I found the Wissa Wassef school: a scattering of white-domed buildings in a forest of palms. And there, on the walls of its "museums," were the

scenes through which I had just driven, transmuted into woven cloth. Nearby were the artists who had created them: young men, middle-aged women, teenage girls, working three to a room in monastic austerity.

Hamama Ramadan, a shy 16-year-old with two works on the go—a hen and her chicks, and a group of hoopes—said with a smile: "I have been working here since I was 13. I hated school: the teachers used to beat us all the time. All I can write is my name."

Her friend Saecda also left because of the brutality, but could at least read the news papers. "I love it here," she said, "but I'm getting married after Ramadan, and I don't think my husband will let me continue working."

Saecda's mother, making a tapestry of

rocks and shrubs in an adjoining room, has worked at the school since she was 10. "I made my husband agree to this before we got married," she said. "The good thing about weaving is that, if you are unhappy, it takes your mind off your troubles. And when you have finished, you can't remember what was upsetting you."

Nadia, 12, never went to school. "That was a privilege for my brothers, but at least they taught me to write my name. I came here a year ago, and learned by watching the older girls. The atmosphere here is wonderfully peaceful. I sit and think before I start a piece, because I need a clear idea of where it's going."

Whoever we talk to, the message is the same. This is a refuge from the oppressions of employment, from the patriarchal constrictions of family life, from the pointless brutality of school.

A young architect, Ramses Wissa Wassef, founded the school in the 1950s, fearful that traditional crafts were dying out. "I had this conviction," he said, "that every human being was born an artist, but that his gifts could only be brought out if encouraged from early childhood."

He and his artist wife bought land in a poor village and spent two years getting to know the children. "I chose to teach them weaving," he said, "because it was an activity that involved a union of body and soul. Drawing, painting and modelling are not craftsman's trades, while work in mosaics, ceramics, wood, stone and metal do not present the same balance between art and craft. Tapestry-making would provide the happy-medium for the experiment I was planning."

They took their pupils on outings to the banks of the Nile, and soon, river scenes

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## World Report

05.10.1998



## PAs optimistic about call for dialogue

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line at certain stages—particularly in relation to normalization with Israel—and last year they, together with the opposition parties, boycotted the parliamentary elections.

The council of presidents of the PAs held its meeting Tuesday to prepare their agenda for the King's visit.

"Up to now, we have only discussed general issues related to the upcoming dialog. We don't know yet when the meeting will be convened, and we want everybody in the Professional Association Complex to take part in the talks," Abu Ghaida told *The Star*. Abu Ghaida did not disclose a specific agenda for talks with the King.

Abu Ghaida, who also leads the 40,000-member Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA), the largest of the professional associations, said he also hoped that the talks will be frank and open, as the King said.

He did not rule out discussing with the King controversial issues with the government, most importantly those that would hinder the adoption of laws which the general assemblies of the PAs had called for and the government had previously rejected.

These include the cancella-

tion of the draft law relating to saving funds of the PAs, which the government planned to introduce earlier in the year. This issue created an uproar especially from companies in the private sector.

Abu Ghaida added that the talks would probably include the issue of Laith Shbiel, the former JEA president, who faces charges for allegedly inciting riots in the south of the Kingdom two months ago, and other cases involving PA members.

Dr Bassim Al Dajani, president of the Doctors Association described the King's initiative as "a great step" which members of professional associations have long waited for.

In a telling statement, Dr Sa'ed Abu Maizer, president of the Dentists Association said that "because of the need for coordination between civic institutions and the government, the absence of dialogue leads to splits among various sectors of society."

Abu Maizer stressed that the PAs will explain "their anti-normalization stance, and its dangerous consequences for the national structure of Jordan."

A question that many are asking is whether a dialogue between the government and the PAs will lead to a similar

step with the opposition parties.

On Sunday, the King said that opposition that results from differences in opinion or tendency should enjoy respect. However, he added that "absolute opposition is unacceptable and unjustified," pointing out that "it contradicts with the Shura principle. We have to consult with each other and discuss our opinions, and search for those who share our opinions, so, eventually, the majority's opinion would prevail...and the results would be fruitful for all." His Majesty said.

About 13 opposition parties, which include Islamists, leftists and pan-Arabists, are against the Jordan-Israel peace treaty. Relations between these parties and the government can be described as cool, at best.

"Unlike previous ones, this government is not the sort to open dialogue with political parties," said Mr Ahmad Al Najdawi, spokesman of the Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party. "We in the opposition have always asked for dialogue with the government, and we still are."

The government planned to draw a draft law for political parties and the PAs, aimed at limiting their activities.

## Jordan celebrates King's assumption of powers

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein on Sunday expressed his thanks and appreciation to all members of the Jordanian family for their good and sincere feelings expressed in marking the 45th anniversary of His Majesty's assumption of constitutional powers.

On Saturday, Jordan celebrated the 45th anniversary of King Hussein's assumption of power.

Streets in Amman were filled with Jordanian flags, while newspapers and radio stations paid tribute to His Majesty who forged a nation.

The King announced one month's bonus pay for the more than 100,000 members of the armed forces and security services.

A procession of cars decked in flowers streamed through the capital Saturday, a public holiday. Night-time fireworks were planned as well as a government celebration on Sunday.

"All those who shared with me our march and responsibility in constructing our homeland deserve side by side with me, this honour," His Majesty said in his remarks concluding celebrations to honor the 45th anniversary of His Majesty's assumption of constitutional powers, held by Prime Minister Dr Abdel Salam Majali.

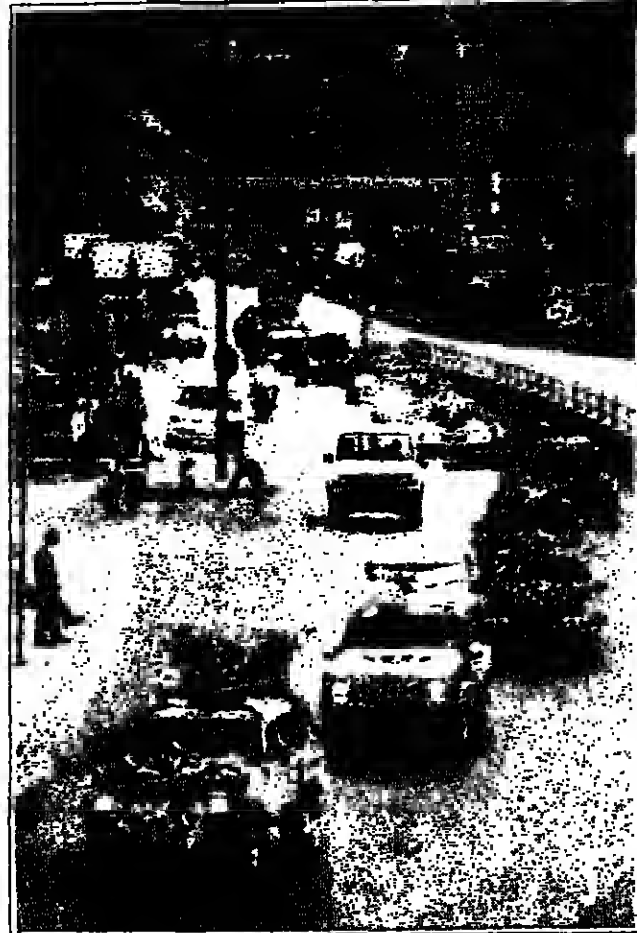
"The National unity is sac-

rosanct." His Majesty said, affirming that it is beyond difference.

"Our endeavour for a just and comprehensive peace targets the interest of human beings regardless of colour, race and religion. This is what our religion calls for," the King said.

His Majesty affirmed the Iraqi people's need for every support, urging to reconsider the means of this support, far from agitation, wasting of time and not working. "We have to focus on what benefits the Iraqi people and human being," His Majesty said.

On the political level His Majesty called for utmost work, "to bring this night to a conclusion and to be on the verge of a new dawn." Prime Minister Majali, former President of the Senate Ahmad Lawzi, President of the Senate Zaid Rifai, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour, Chairman of the Juridical Council Sleiman Awajan, in their remarks hailed the wise and courageous leadership of His Majesty King Hussein along 45 years since his assumption of constitutional powers. The remarks pointed to the great accomplishments that Jordan has achieved during that time.



Cars decked with flowers for the occasion

## For the Record

Jordan, Israel talks

AMMAN, (Petra)—Minister of Industry and Trade Dr Hani Mulki discussed with his Israeli counterpart Nathan Sharansky in Petra on Monday, issues relating to trade exchange between the two countries, as well as obstacles facing this process—especially with regard to Jordanian exports to the Palestinian National Authority and Israel.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mulki said the talks were successful and that the Israeli side has shown positive signals on the issues discussed.

"The Jordanian side stressed the importance of enlarging the A1 and A2 lists (trade lists between the Palestinians and Israelis)," Mulki added, pointing out that the Israeli side responded positively to this request. The minister said that there are many Jordanian goods that will reach the Palestinian market and that putting them in the A1 and A2 lists means that they are exempt from customs duties. "The talks also covered in detail the issue of exporting Jordanian cement to the PNA, as well as obstacles facing this process," Mulki added. With regard to the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ), he said that the two sides agreed on the need to implement technical standards and specifications for companies which could benefit from these areas. "The Jordanian side expressed willingness to extend the QIZ to other areas in the future so that the factories which will be established in this area would benefit from the privileges given to the QIZ," the minister pointed out.

The two sides also agreed on the necessity to apply QIZ standards and specifications so that companies would have the chance to export their products to the markets as soon as possible. Talks also touched upon the economic ties between Jordan, the PNA and Israel. The Jordanian side affirmed the importance of promoting trade exchange as well as economic growth and prosperity among the three parties.

American NGO mission leaves

AMMAN, (Petra)—AmeriCares, the first American non-governmental organization to fly relief aid to Iraq, recently delivered 41 tons of mostly medical supplies to the country. The group left Amman on Sunday to head back to New York. AmeriCares Media coordinator Mary Harrison said in an interview with Petra that the organization plans to make another trip to deliver more medical supplies because of the Iraqis' dire need for them. The Jordanian government, for minimal charges, provided the US charity team with a special air carrier to Iraq to deliver the supplies, as well as a Royal Wings charter plane to carry the 20 American volunteers who supervised the delivery. Ms. Harrison said, "The shipment is the first of its kind by the US since Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. The White House hailed the relief shipment as reflecting 'the concern of the government and the people of the United States for the welfare of the Iraqi people.'"

Prime Minister meets US delegation

AMMAN, (Petra)—Prime Minister Dr Abdul Salam Majali received on Tuesday a delegation representing the US Foreign Relations Council, headed by Henry Segman. The Prime Minister underlined the need for concerted efforts on all levels to push the peace process forward and remove obstacles facing it. Majali pointed out that peace has become an international strategy and that its absence will lead to dangerous repercussions and results that would not be in the interest of any party in the region. The Premier commended the positive Palestinian stand which is committed to peace. He also praised the Palestinian leader's acceptance of the recent US peace initiative. The Prime Minister also paid tribute to efforts exerted by the US council to encourage all concerned parties to push the peace process forward. The head of the US delegation on his part commended the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein as well as his Majesty's efforts to back the peace process.

## Waking up to your horoscope

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of each of the 12 horoscopes. However, Mustafa points out that his interest in reading the stars emanates from curiosity rather than belief, which is often the case with others who consistently dive for their horoscopes in their morning papers.

"We have 88 groups of stars, 40 of which were discovered in the 16th century. When we talk about a constellation we mean a group of stars," said Mr Inad Mujahed from the Meteorology Dept.

"The 12 zodiac signs are made up of groups of stars which ancient peoples linked together, and to which they give different shapes," Mr Mujahed continued. "If a group of stars formed the

shape of a lion, for instance, and the sun is in that spot when a baby is born, the baby will have the personality of a lion, which means courage and strength."

But again this really means that the process of foretelling features and events for the person concerned are mere speculations.

"We know that the sun and moon have a physical influence on humans, but the other planets and stars do not," Mujahed said.

Scientists believe that the gravity of the moon—especially when it becomes a full moon—increases bleeding. That's why doctors avoid the operating room during this time, if they can possibly avoid it. It has also been determined

that robberies, murders and traffic accidents significantly increase when the moon is full—a time also during which many people become abnormally nervous.

Mr Mujahed, who has been working in the field for 20 years, also mentioned that hospitals caring for those who suffer from mental or emotional disorders often declare a state of emergency on the days when the moon is nearly full, because of the extreme agitation it produces in their patients.

In addition, solar activities have a similar effect on our bodies and behaviors—and also on the spread of certain highly contagious diseases, such as Typhoid and Cholera.

## Albright presses Netanyahu to accept US plan

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lions sought an urgent conference call with the secretary of state, now scheduled for late Wednesday.

"If she wants to try to ratchet up the pressure (on Israel) it's not going to work," executive vice chairman Malcolm Hoenlein said in a telephone interview from New York. "When it comes to second guessing Israel on security you cross a very delicate

line, and I think the administration understands that."

It was not yet clear, on the other hand, that Netanyahu will find a way to accommodate Clinton. Albright sought to leave an opening by praising the "constructive and interesting ideas" she said Netanyahu had brought to the unsuccessful London talks.

Netanyahu, speaking here before Albright made her public remarks, said, "I'm satisfied Israel's security is protected, then we can close the gaps."

The US proposal explored in recent days by US special envoy Dennis Ross calls for a phased Israeli withdrawal from 13 per cent of the West Bank far below the more than 30 per cent Arafat had expected at this stage in exchange for increased Palestinian efforts to crack down on Islamist resistance.

It would also commit Israel to the further "redeployment" Netanyahu agreed to in January 1997, and require his government to stop expanding Jewish settlements in Arab east Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Netanyahu originally

offered only 9 percent, claiming more would undermine "Israel's security."

Under previous accords the West Bank is now divided into three categories: Area A, or full Palestinian control, covers 3 percent of the territory; Area B, where Israeli troops are no longer based but may return at will, covers 24 percent; and Area C, with full Israeli control, covering the remaining 73 percent.

Netanyahu is said by diplomats to be interested in creating a "B-minus" or "C-plus" category, with nominal Palestinian National Authority and Israel's security forces firmly in place. But when the American delegation presented that idea to Palestinians for the first time Tuesday it was firmly rebuffed. US officials declined to answer whether the American demand for a 13 percent withdrawal could be satisfied in part by such a hybrid.

A breakthrough in London might have brought Arafat a temporary respite, restoring some credibility to his battered peace policy, but it would force him to enter so-called "final status" talks with

Netanyahu holding far less land than he expected when he signed the 1993 Oslo peace accords.

A breakdown might unite the Arafat world behind Arafat at a summit to declare the peace process dead, but it could also undermine his position by triggering violence that spins out of his Palestinian National Authority's control.

Palestinian officials said Arafat would fly to Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt for consultations with Arab leaders after the London talks.

Arafat has said he may declare a Palestinian state when the deadline for a final status agreement expires next May. Diplomats fear this would prompt Israel to annex the parts of the West Bank it still occupies.

For Albright, success would restore some of the United States' lost prestige to the Arab and Muslim world, but failure could open a period of tension with Israel, which has powerful supporters in the US Congress.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

## Iraqi ingenuity lessens effects of sanctions

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trick to haul the reeds to a market where they will feed animals, a substitute for the cattle feed that Iraq used to import.

"It is hard work," said Amir, dressed in the rags of his work. He will earn about \$1 a day, as will Nassim. With food rations from the government, it is enough for both men to get by. "We do what we must to survive," said Amir.

That versatility has been the key to Iraq's survival under what has been a starvation income for most of seven years.

Officially, Iraq was permitted only limited trade with its neighbors after 1990, when the sanctions were imposed following the invasion of Kuwait. In May 1996, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein finally agreed to a UN plan allowing him to sell \$2 billion worth of oil every six months, to be used for food, medicine and reparations for Kuwaitis and other victims of the Gulf War.

In February, the UN Security Council agreed to more than double the "oil-for-food" program. Iraq now may sell \$5.2 billion worth of oil every six

months, although the government has said its damaged oil industry cannot pump that much. The income is to be spent only on food, medicine and approved humanitarian supplies.

But in the major cities, the markets are full of imports supposedly banned by the embargo. In Basra at the southern tip of Iraq, the souk that opens after dusk cools the air is packed with women in black chadors examining kilims from Iran, imported clothes from Indonesia, French-made infant formula and American laundry detergent.

Salah Awwad, a chandelier salesman, shows off a light fixture for 250,000 Iraqi dinars—about \$200, astronomically higher than an average government worker's 4,000-dinar monthly wage.

"There are those with money," Awwad said with a smile. There are smugglers.

"Do you think they could keep 23 million people fed and clothed on \$2 billion every six months? Of course not," scoffed a European diplomat in Baghdad. "It's peanuts. It's flour and sugar and beans. But you need shoes, you need coffee, you

need ashtrays and jeans and spare parts for the cars. You get it by smuggling."

The lines of that illegal supply are so routine that the government places smuggling orders, said an Iraqi involved in the business. Speaking privately, he said it would be dangerous to be named.

He said government agencies inform his company of what they need, from uniforms to filling cabinets. The company arranges for the purchase overseas, and is paid by the government in oil.

"You can choose to take delivery of the oil in the north or in the south," said the Iraqi. From the north, oil tanker trucks will go into Iran, where the oil is refined. From the south, it might be loaded on small vessels at Basra, ships small enough to hug the coastline of the Gulf and avoid the naval blockade to reach Iraq or Abu Dhabi.

Once it is safely "legal," the oil is converted to cash to pay for the goods, which arrive in the country through a variety of channels.

Ships delivering food aid engage in smuggling of a sort. They arrive at the Umm Qasr port almost empty of fuel. They

take on huge quantities of the cheap diesel fuel in their tanks, sailing out past the American or allied naval ships enforcing the blockade, according to diplomats familiar with the maneuver.

While the embargo has hurt many Iraqis, others have profited. Lawyers are said to be doing very well with the rise of divorce sales and divorces. Repairs of all types are busy; auto mechanics are in prime demand to keep old cars on the roads with few new parts.

Nature's laws of survival are mimicked in commerce: If the appliance store is failing, open up a repair shop. If the supermarket cannot survive selling poor Iraqi brands, switch to smuggled varieties. Everything is available here, for a price.

Since the oil-for-food program began in December 1996, rationing providing a diet of 2,000 calories a day—a meager, meatless, but sustainable diet—have been distributed. Eric Falk, a spokesman for the UN humanitarian efforts in Iraq, said an extensive monitoring program has satisfied observers that the food ration is reaching "99.5 percent" of Iraq's population.

Health experts and Iraqi doctors say the malnutrition is no longer the result of lack of basic food, as it was in 1993, 1994 and 1995. Instead, it stems from the damaged infrastructure that cannot provide sanitary drinking water nor properly handle sewage.

"It's not directly lack of food," said Evgeni Parfenov, head of the Iraq delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. "It's very, very bad water."

That leads to intestinal diseases that can dehydrate and eventually kill children, a problem made more acute in rural areas where parents have no money and little knowledge of what to do.

In the countryside outside Basra, Yacob Yusef gathers his seven children around him, and says they would have starved without the food ration. But now, "thanks to God, we are all healthy," he said. "The most important thing is to survive."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

## Weaving a new way

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began to appear on their looms. Wissa Wassef laid down three rules: no preliminary drawings, so that the act of creation was spontaneous; no imitation; and no interference from adults. This was to be a journey into virgin territory.

Wissa Wassef spoke of the "flash of joy" when a child hit on an idea. The vaulted rooms of the museum were full of such flashes, but one sensed other things, too. The weavers work from the bottom of a tapestry, and the ideas grow visibly more complex towards the top. "When someone finishes a piece," said Ramses' daughter, Suzanne, "every-

body joins in oo the birds and clouds. The excitement is extraordinary."

She pointed out works of particular significance, such as the picture of a village devoid of people, with one house standing darkly apart. That was by a boy called Shehata Hamza. A wonderful artist, but schizophrenic. This was his last work: the dark house is his own. He committed suicide.

Another tapestry showed a crisis more happily resolved. "This is by a woman called Karima," she said. "She came to me and said her husband was taking another wife, and that she was too distressed to make anything beautiful. I

told her to put her pain into her weaving, so she started a battle scene full of blood and bodies."

After six months she was emotionally exhausted, so she put in a pool for the soldiers' horses to drink from. The top of her tapestry is serene. That reflected the fact that she had come to terms with her husband's decision.

You couldn't wish for a more benign therapy. And since these artists receive a quarter of the price their creations fetch, they walk tall among their neighbors.

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JORD

For the Record

Jordan, Israel talks

AMMAN, (Petra)—Minister of Industry and Trade Dr Hani Mulki discussed with his Israeli counterpart Nathan Sharansky in Petra on Monday, issues relating to trade exchange between the two countries, as well as obstacles facing this process—especially with regard to Jordanian exports to the Palestinian National Authority and Israel.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mulki said the talks were successful and that the Israeli side has shown positive signals on the issues discussed.

"The Jordanian side stressed the importance of enlarging the A1 and A2 lists (trade lists between the Palestinians and Israelis)," Mulki added, pointing out that the Israeli side responded positively to this request. The minister said that there are many Jordanian goods that will reach the Palestinian market and that putting them in the A1 and A2 lists means that they are exempt from customs duties. "The talks also covered in detail the issue of exporting Jordanian cement to the PNA, as well as obstacles facing this process," Mulki added. With regard to the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ), he said that the two sides agreed on the need to implement technical standards and specifications for companies which could benefit from these areas. "The Jordanian side expressed willingness to extend the QIZ to other areas in the future so that the factories which will be established in this area would benefit from the privileges given to the QIZ," the minister pointed out.

The two sides also agreed on the necessity to apply QIZ standards and specifications so that companies would have the chance to export their products to the markets as soon as possible. Talks also touched upon the economic ties between Jordan, the PNA and Israel. The Jordanian side affirmed the importance of promoting trade exchange as well as economic growth and prosperity among the three parties.

American NGO mission leaves

AMMAN, (Petra)—AmeriCares, the first American non-governmental organization to fly relief aid to Iraq, recently delivered 41 tons of mostly medical supplies to the country. The group left Amman on Sunday to head back to New York. AmeriCares Media coordinator Mary Harrison said in an interview with Petra that the organization plans to make another trip to deliver more medical supplies because of the Iraqis' dire need for them. The Jordanian government, for minimal charges, provided the US charity team with a special air carrier to Iraq to deliver the supplies, as well as a Royal Wings charter plane to carry the 20 American volunteers who supervised the delivery. Ms. Harrison said, "The shipment is the first of its kind by the US since Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. The White House hailed the relief shipment as reflecting 'the concern of the government and the people of the United States for the welfare of the Iraqi people.'"

Prime Minister meets US delegation

AMMAN, (Petra)—Prime Minister Dr Abdul Salam Majali received on Tuesday a delegation representing the US Foreign Relations Council, headed by Henry Segman. The Prime Minister underlined the need for concerted efforts on all levels to push the peace process forward and remove obstacles facing it. Majali pointed out that peace has become an international strategy and that its absence will lead to dangerous repercussions and results that would not be in the interest of any party in the region. The Premier commended the positive Palestinian stand which is committed to peace. He also praised the Palestinian leader's acceptance of the recent US peace initiative. The Prime Minister also paid tribute to efforts exerted by the US council to encourage all concerned parties to push the peace process forward. The head of the US delegation on his part commended the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein as well as his Majesty's efforts to back the peace process.

Original: Photographs by David Roberts, Deborah, Prominent, Yusef, Diaz and others. Views of Jerusalem, Lebanon and Holy Land. Also 19th century engravings by Wm Bartlett. For information call: Tel. 5664805



JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Kuwait releases Jordanian prisoners

Kuwait is to release 13 Jordanian prisoners in a general amnesty. Kuwait Interior Minister Sheikh Muhammad Khalid Al Sabah said that a further 25 Jordanian prisoners held in a Kuwaiti prison will be transferred to Jordan under a "collective passport." Earlier it was reported that a 41-persons delegation comprising family members of prisoners are being allowed a visit that will take place on 15 May. This visit, which is organized by the International Red Cross in cooperation with the Kuwaiti government is the fourth of its kind since 1995.

High accident rate

A recent study found that 2,481 deaths and 66,088 injuries occurred on Jordanian roads in the last five years. The cause for a high percentage of the accidents is the same as the reason a large number of traffic violations are handed out—arbitrarily and often carelessly changing lanes without signalling, and sometimes not driving in any lane at all.

Statement denied

Minister of Public Works and Acting Information Minister Nasser Al Lawzi was quoted as saying that a statement recently issued by the Abu Thir Al Ghofari group claiming responsibility for the explosion that occurred in a car outside the Jerusalem Hotel has no credibility. He pointed out that those who signed the statement had no precise information about the explosion. He added that investigations are still under way. The security forces have already detained a number of people from the People's Democratic Party, Hashd, but it is not known whether there is a connection. A number of people were also arrested from the Baqaa Camp. Arrests in Amman, Zerga and Baqaa were confirmed by Muhammad Al Azaidah, who heads the Public Freedoms Committee of the Lower House.

Teachers

About 600 teachers from public schools around the country are to be retired. It is understood that the teachers, both male and female, were going to retire voluntarily anyway.

Hamas

It was first thought that Hamas will be moving its offices to Damascus. However Hamas politburo member Dr Musa Abu Marzook said that such news is totally incorrect, adding that Hamas will stay put in Jordan. He added that the issue is not even on the agenda. Hamas officials in Amman pointed out that relations with Jordan are good.

Ambassadors

Starting from the beginning of this month members of the Jordanian diplomatic corps are to have a new salary scale as agreed upon by the Council of Ministers. An ambassador with a special mission is to receive JD 900 per month while an ordinary ambassador is to receive JD 600.

Law

The Judicial Council has appointed Taher Hikmat to be the president of the Higher Judicial Council and the Head of the Cassation Court. Mr Hikmat is a former minister who has served in many previous governments.



His Majesty King Hussein speaks to the Royal Special Forces on the occasion of its 35th anniversary Sunday, which also coincided with His Majesty's 45th anniversary of his assumption of constitutional powers. The King also instructed Prime Minister Dr Abdel Salam Al Majali to pay one month's salary to those who work in the Royal Forces, police, civil defence, and General Intelligence Dept. Her Majesty Queen Noor also attended the celebration.

Point system aims to reduce traffic mishaps

Continued from page 1

patrols, commuters who use public transport vehicles, mobile cameras, etc," he adds.

Colonel Al Shamayleh maintains that "it is still premature to judge whether this system is practical enough to provide a deterrent. However, first readings of field operations conducted by traffic patrols indicate that positive results could be attained in the long run."

"So far, no driver has collected 12 points and our doors are open for any citizen who claims he has been badly treated by our staff," says Colonel Al Shamayleh.

He concludes by calling on all drivers and pedestrians to abide by the traffic rules. Actually, the deterrent must also come from the people themselves—it's difficult to compel drivers to be committed to the new system if they lack the motive of the intention to do so. Those reluctant to accept the new system should remember that there were 16,259 car-related injuries in 1997. This was in addition to 577 fatalities. Of course, the material loss—estimated at JD100 million—is equally serious, including dam-

age to cars and highway facilities. The rise in the number of injured persons who, as a result of accidents, incur medical costs and are often out of a job during their recovery period, as well as those permanently handicapped and who will never be able to work, also takes its financial toll.

President of the Jordan Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents, Muhammad Al Dahas tells *The Star*, "we fully support the government in introducing this system as we have been calling for this action for the last 10 years."

Al Dahas says that while there is a case for applying the law rigorously, it's sometimes better to be flexible and patient in the process of implementing it. "No one can deny that it can function as a deterrent for careless drivers who expose their lives and lives of others in danger." But the Road Society has further opinions about the system. A demand to increase points for violations of first grade offenders. "Four points for each of these violations is not enough," Al Dahas suggests. Explaining his view, he says "some offenses listed in the first



Al Shamayleh

criticism are not merely violations, they are crimes."

However, the Society applauded the application of the points system. "We do agree with the Traffic Directorate that the new system should go through a probation period of about one year, at the end of which the results would be reviewed," Al Dahas says.

But he points to another important issue. "It's better to focus on the causes behind such violations—

who violates and why?" He also notes that it is imperative to implement the law justly and on all violators without exception.

But putting the blame on drivers is not entirely fair. "Sometimes road mishaps have to do with the nature of the road—an uneven road can sometimes lead to serious accidents. Thus the responsibility is shared between several parties—the car, driver and the road," Al Dahas suggests.

Sharing this view also is Li Mohammad Sayel Al Rosan, of the Public Relations Department, who maintains that sometimes pedestrians have a role in raising the number of car accidents. They don't always cross the street at the pedestrian markings. "There are pedestrians who prefer to cross a crowded street instead of using one of the many pedestrian tunnels constructed for exactly that purpose," Li Al Rosan says.

Al Dahas suggests that public transportation has to be enhanced to reduce the number of private cars on the road, minimizing the number of accidents and making the roads safer for everyone.

State of the press

INTERNATIONAL PRESS Freedom Day, held Sunday, was marked by a feeling of renewed optimism despite the challenges that lie ahead. On the occasion of the 45th anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's assumption of his constitutional powers, Jordan's Press Association (JPA) has urged the King to pardon all journalists being tried in court for allegedly violating the press law.

For its part the JPA promised that it would use the occasion to instill a more professional attitude in the field of journalism. In a statement, it added that the JPA is following carefully the government's plan to introduce amendments to the Press and Publications Law of 1993. The Press Association expressed its wish to be consulted in all stages in the drawing the draft, saying that it considers itself the most appropriate body to give advice in this matter.

Clearly the statement was a conciliatory one. The JPA said that it wants to "give advice and help." Maybe this will be a new chapter in Jordan's press relations as the JPA is recognized by the press body itself—dailies as well as weeklies.

Earlier in the week, two new reports issued by international bodies criticized Jordan's press freedoms. Jordan is generally thought to have one of the most liberal press laws in the region. Nevertheless, both the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and the Jordanian Society for Human Rights (JSHR) were equally strong in the issue.

JSHR said that freedom of press and opinion, and the right of citizens to have access to information, deteriorated in 1997.

It said "May 3 1997 to May 3 1998 period was a black year for the freedom of the press and expression in Jordan as was clear in the reports of three world human rights groups."

The CPJ was scathing. It placed two Arab leaders on its list of the 10 "enemies of the press" for 1997 in its report issued earlier this week. These were Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali, and Tunisian president Zein Al Abedine. The report said that all Arab governments must protect and preserve the freedom of the press and push forward their democratic processes. However, the CPJ also urged journalists to abide by the codes and ethics of the profession.

The Jordanian Society said that "in monitoring the exercise of press freedoms in Jordan over the past year," it "regrettably did not find any high aspects that deserve praise." But it pointed out that there was an exception in this—the "historic verdict passed by the high court last January which ruled that the temporary Press and Publications Law was unconstitutional, as were the subsequent administrative decisions that prevented the weeklies from publishing."

The JSHR went on to publish the court cases against journalists during 1997.

Freedom House, an organization that is dedicated to the promotion of liberty and democracy said that only 20 percent of the world's people live in countries with a free press. The Washington-based organization said that "worldwide today, only one person in five has access to news and analysis that is not distorted or censored."

In a survey, Freedom House suggested that in comparison to last year, one percent fewer of the world's population live in nations with a free press. ■

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RJ flights to Tehran resume

Amman (Petra)—Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) resumes its regular flights to the Iranian capital, Tehran, next month after an 18 year hiatus, RJ official said Wednesday.

The volume of religious tourism from Iran to Islamic sites in Jordan will be boosted by the new schedule.

The number of Iranians visiting the sepulchers of some followers of Prophet Mohammad have noticeably increased during the last two years.

The flights will also encourage commercial relations between Jordanian and Iranian businessmen. The RJ is due to fly twice weekly to Tehran. No Iranian airline has declared its intention to fly to Amman in the near future, an RJ official said. ■

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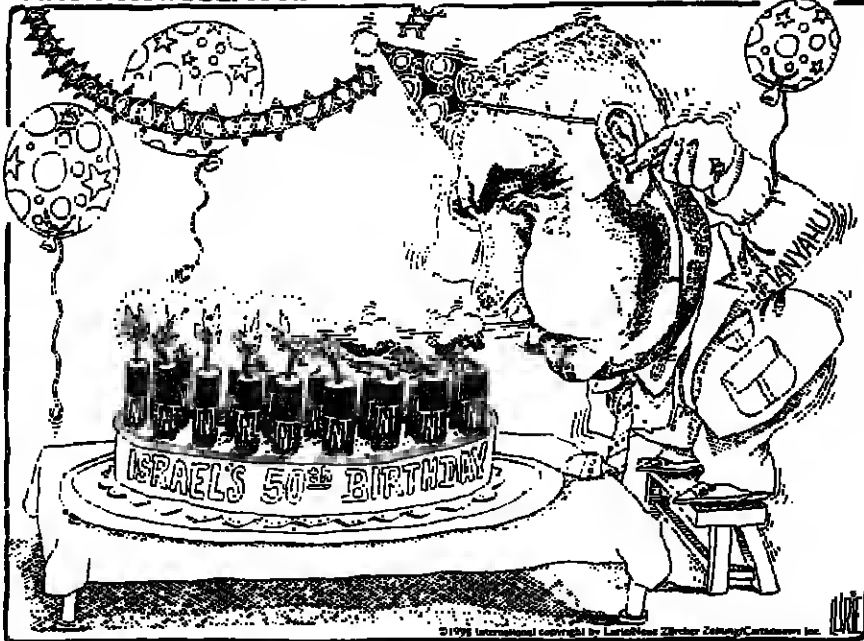
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## Lurie's NewsCartoon



## Our Say...

## Great expectations

THE LONDON talks, which were aimed at hammering out a deal between the Palestinians and the Israelis, have broken down without an agreement over a much delayed Israeli re-deployment from the occupied territories. But ever since the Middle East peace process, which is based on the principle of exchanging land for peace, turned into a long and frustrating haggling process over percentages and definitions of Israel's security, expectations of a breakthrough, such as the one reached in Oslo more than four years ago, have all but dissipated. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rebuffed US efforts to convince him to accept an American proposal on the size of the expected re-deployment.

By doing so he has succeeded in forcing his own agenda on all parties involved. The failure in London is indeed a slap in the face of the Americans, even though they were careful not to raise expectations. The only achievement, it now seems, was to get the two parties to agree to meet again in Washington next week.

For the Palestinians, the London venue was a good exercise in public relations. They had accepted the US proposal even though it fell below the minimum that was agreed upon under the Oslo accords. They had clearly emerged as the victim from this round, obliging US requests and showing willingness to walk that extra mile. Netanyahu, on the other hand, was able to buy precious time and go back to an ever divided Israel and an increasingly fragile governing coalition. While the future of the peace process looks bleak indeed, one has to take into account that in politics winners and losers are not instantly declared. The Palestinians continue to enjoy international backing and sympathy. More than that, they have honored their obligations under Oslo and the Washington Declaration while Israel hasn't.

Netanyahu's intransigence is not an alternative to the peace process, and while he would love to see the Palestinians pull out of the process altogether, he himself cannot afford to do so. The Palestinians, for their part, have few cards to play at this stage. Showing up at every meeting purporting to restart the peace process may be a better one than anyone thinks. Every time they show up, they drive Israel into further isolation and add to its internal divisions. Netanyahu's tactics of changing the rules of the game and humiliating the Palestinians may not work any longer, as he faces challenges from within his own party and fails to offer an alternative to a lasting and just peace with the Palestinians.

For the Palestinians, the waiting game carries a hefty price tag as well. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat must deliver something to his people in order to maintain internal unity and avoid a collapse of Palestinian institutions in the self-rule areas. The Palestinians are in dire need of international, and Arab, support. This must be forthcoming if they are to emerge as winners once the Netanyahu era comes to a dismal end.



Albanian children outside a home that was shelled by Serbians, Sunday

## The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

An independent political, economic and cultural weekly, published every Thursday in Amman by Media Services International (Info-Medio).  
Editorial & Advertising: Telephone: +652-380, 4645-380, Fax: 4648-298,  
P.O. Box 9313, Postal Code 11191 Amman - Jordan. email: Star@arabia.com  
URL: http://www.star.arabia.com

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The Star is serviced by LA Times-Washington Post News Service, Cartoons International (Lurie cartoons), PANOS, The WorldPoper, Editors Press Service, STILLS and by correspondents in the United States and South Asia.  
Member of The International Advertising Association

Subscriptions: (annual) Jordan JD 20, Arab countries US\$ 100, W. Europe US\$ 150, USA & Canada US\$ 200.

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## A critical approach

## What the new Lebanon needs

By Ghazi Assali

April 13 marked the 23rd anniversary of the Lebanese civil war, a 15-year tragedy of death and destruction that ravaged the country, and left in its wake hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded and more than a million emigrants. The actual war ended in 1990 with the re-establishment of central government on all Lebanese territory, the exception being the south occupied by Israel.

Since then, and with the signing of the Taif Agreement in Saudi Arabia that set the stage for more equitable power sharing between Christians and Muslims, reconstruction projects have been steadily underway. Solidere, the company that monopolizes the rebuilding of the destroyed downtown area, happens to be owned by billionaire prime minister Rafiq Hariri.

The country's infrastructure is being put back in place; electricity is now back 24 hours a day, new highways are being built, new phone lines are being established, and garbage pickups are improving. However, political problems are still in place, including some of the same structural ones that caused the civil war.

First: The political system is still the same as the old sectarian system established when the country gained its independence from France in 1943. A few reforms have given more executive powers to the prime minister, who must be a Sunni Muslim, while diminishing those of the president of the republic who is always a Maronite Christian.

However, these minor patch-

ups are not near enough to overhaul such an outdated system.

Lebanon, which is a mosaic of 18 different religious sects, needs a fully secular political and social system in all spheres of public life to function properly. Employees today are still being appointed in government to fill religious quotas, and marriages are still being exclusively performed in religious courts. A civil marriage law is still pending because the

Moreover, the electoral system needs reforms that would boost political parties that are non-sectarian. This would be accomplished if the whole country was turned into one electoral unit where parties run on the basis of a national platform, not powerful family names or sectarian and regional identities. The success of such a system would become the litmus test for political maturity and awareness in the new Lebanon.

Commercialism, exploitation, and superficiality are the order of the day, with a new generation reeling from the imitation of every imaginable crust of westernization.

But this state of affairs could sooner or later explode into social unrest unless the country's wealth is shared and invested back in society to insure stability and growth. Few voices in the political arena dare to defy the ban on freedom of expression. However, the parliamentary deputy from Beirut, Najah Wakim, has been a genuine voice of honesty and courage for the poor and struggling people of Lebanon.

Third: The Israeli occupation of South Lebanon will always be an obstacle to a real and stable peace. The constant shelling of villages, Israeli aggression and bombings that sometimes affect the country as a whole, like Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996, are a constant reminder of the fragility of the new peace. Another case in point is the Qana massacre on April 18, 1996, when Israel intentionally shelled a United Nations refugee camp in South Lebanon, resulting in the deaths of over a hundred civilians, mostly children and elderly seeking safe haven under the protection of the UN.

The recent talk of an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the South, with French mediation, has yet to materialize. No pre-conditions by Israel should be accepted except for the full and complete implementation of UN Resolution 425 which calls for a total and unconditional withdrawal from South Lebanon. That will pave the way for peace.

*The constant shelling of villages, Israeli aggression and bombings that sometimes affect the country as a whole, like Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996, are a constant reminder of the fragility of the new peace.*

prime minister has yet to sign it.

I would seriously suggest not only a law allowing for civil marriages, but also pecuniary and moral incentives to encourage inter-sectarian marriages which, in a generation or two, could result in the social unification of the Lebanese population. In addition, mixed religious neighborhoods and towns should be encouraged, as they already exist in different parts of the country.

Second: The social infrastructure of the country remains in shambles, with a devastated middle and working class. The Lebanese middle class was practically decimated during the civil war, leaving two broadly-defined social classes in the country: the wealthy on one side, especially the wealthy political elite, and, on the other side, the majority of the Lebanese people, impoverished, powerless, and working hard just to make ends meet.

## Islam and cultural interaction

Beyond Belief, by V.S. Naipaul, London, 1998

Reviewed by Anatol Lieven

THE CENTRAL theme, or common thread, of V.S. Naipaul's latest reflective travelogue is perhaps the least developed aspect of this fascinating and beautiful work. *Beyond Belief* is a follow up to *Among the Believers*, written 17 years ago, and revisits some of the same people. His intention was to focus on the way in which the Arabic origins of Islam affect the cultures and psychologies of the non-Arab "converted peoples" of the East Indies, Iran and Pakistan.

In Naipaul's words, "A convert's world view alters. His holy places are in Arab lands; his sacred language is Arabic. His idea of history alters. He rejects his own; he becomes, whether he likes it or not, a part of the Arab story. The convert has to turn away from everything that is his. The disturbance for societies is immense, and even after a thousand years can remain unresolved; the turning away has to be done again and again."

The tension between the new world "fundamentalist" and koranic and therefore by definition Arabising Islam and local Muslim traditions, often mixed with pre-Islamic elements, is indeed of vital importance in the Islamic world today. It partly underlies the civil war in Afghanistan, present clashes in Dagestan, and the party politics of half a dozen countries.

Naipaul however does not fully bring out that these struggles are between old and powerful trends within Islam itself. Throughout its history Islam has adapted to, and been subverted by, the cultures it has conquered, and the syncretic traditions thus established have proved extremely strong. The swaying balance between these traditions and the desire for a return to koranic origins has been going on for some 1300 years, and will probably last as long as Islam itself.

Naipaul's emphasis on the "imperial" character of Arabising Islam also somewhat obscures an equally valid comparison in medieval Catholicism's use of Latin as the language of religion, law and education. The result was to make these fields the preserve of a clerical elite, cut off from ordinary people and their "vernacular", but not seen as attached to a "foreign" culture as such.

However, for long stretches of *Beyond Belief*, Naipaul wanders from his central theme. Much of the section on Pakistan, for example, deals with the malignant legacy of feudalism, given new strength by the Afghan wars and the rise of the drug trade. It also embraces a lurid, but doubtless accurate account of the sexual practices of the last Nawab of Bahawalpur and his 390 concubines. On a more cheerful note, the section on Indonesia contains a piercing, hauntingly beautiful description of a girl's childhood in the world of a traditional rural clan.

But we should be grateful that Naipaul did not tie himself down too closely to his original program. For there have been quite enough schematic accounts of the Islamic world, whether from critics or self-

appointed tribunes. Naipaul achieves something much rarer and more valuable. He actually allows his interlocutors to speak for themselves. The result is a series of profound meditations on societies and individuals in the throes of wrenching change.

*Beyond Belief* displays two of Naipaul's greatest qualities as an observer. His jewel-like individual profiles are set in a filigree-work of acute physical, cultural, historical and psychological detail. He is also extraordinarily dogged in his questioning, to an extent that should shame most journalists. If there is a gap or inconsistency in one of the accounts given him, then he goes on drilling away until he is satisfied that he has got the whole picture.

These qualities are closely related to Naipaul's technique in his novels. More surprising perhaps is Naipaul's warm sympathy even for many of his Islamist subjects, a sympathy which gives this book its deeply moving quality (and if his recent marriage to a Pakistani journalist, Nadira Khanum Alvi, acquiesces him of any gut anti-Muslim prejudice, some of his most justifi-

bly bitter criticisms of Islam relate to its treatment of women).

The sympathy however has deep roots in Naipaul's own life. Several of the personal stories in this book contain echoes of his most-loved father, immortalized in *A House for Mr. Biswas*: a man struggling comically but also heroically to be an upright, independent and fully developed intellectual in Trinidad, a peripheral colony, with a deep sense of its own cultural unimportance, and with a hopelessly fractured and dislocated culture and society.

Another clue I believe lies in his observation that, "Good or valuable writing is more than a technical skill; it depends on a certain moral wholeness in the writer." Naipaul writes acutely of the way in which a search for wholeness through "adherence to causes like Communism or Islam leads to writers falsifying their calling and becoming second-rate; but he also understands very well the burning needs which drive men and women into that search."

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## Lurie's NewsCartoon



China and Taiwan start talks

Middle East  
East  
by  
Khairi Janbani  
Anniversaries

CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARIES is a tradition adopted by various peoples and nations to commemorate occasions that are held dear to them.

One wonders, if the celebrations over the 50th Anniversary of the creation of Israel took place under different circumstances—in other words, if the whole peace issue were not on the agenda of the region—what would Arab public opinion have been?

Most probably not much different than what it currently is. This particular occasion reflects the state of the peace, as well as how it sits within the consciousness of the Arab and Israeli peoples.

It seems there is an apparent inability on the part of both peoples to cope with the notion, due to the general feeling that governs the existing relations between both sides, that of "victor" on the one hand, and "vanquished" on the other. Where justice is lacking, and parity is non-existent, the general view of the situation will tend to be split between *de jure* recognition of one nation, and *de facto* recognition of another.

In other words, when Israel celebrates, the Palestinians—as well as all the other occupied Arab territories—are reminded of their plight, and the fact that there are still injustices that need to be rectified. The ethos of peace ought to eliminate notions of "victor" and "vanquished" and to affirm the relationship of equal partners.

Yet in order to accomplish this, history cannot be continuously written in the "victorious" manner of winners doubled up with the "lamentable" situation of losers. Rather, it must be written and manifested in participatory terms based on the premise of "Right is Right," rather than the other way round. And the notion of "Right" can only be talked about when the balance in our region is redressed.

The US is a superpower and, without reservations, can send participants to any celebration it chooses, as the case of Vice-President Al Gore's recent visit to Israel demonstrates. As a re-affirmation of the special relationship between the US and Israel, Gore openly stated that his own country identifies with the vision of Israel, and declared continuing and unequivocal US support.

That in itself is a matter of bilateral relations between two countries which, no other party can realistically alter or affect. Gore's statement left much unsaid, and that is where our pre-occupations with such terms as peace and all its implications—Palestinian rights, justice for the refugees, and co-existence for the time being, remain. Unfortunately, the unsaid carries with it issues that are just as important as the anniversary of Israel's creation.

If things are left unsaid, it does not mean they do not exist. The creation of Israel and the simultaneous start of the Palestinian tragedy which resulted in each party's currently irreconcilable tracks—a problem that ought to be seriously worked on in a spirit of mutual co-existence and peace. The issue of Arab occupied territories, as well as the important question of Palestinian refugees still await a solution in the context of a peaceful settlement to the conflict between the Arab world and Israel, in terms of a comprehensive and just peace. Otherwise, Israel will remain both a victor and an oppressor, an image it prefers not to perpetuate, and one which the US cannot share.

Perhaps amidst all the celebrations it is time for Israel to reflect, and aim at taking the necessary steps to achieve reconciliation with its Arab neighbors, who without any doubt want the balance of justice redressed, and wish for a partnership of equals in a region of peace, stability and prosperity. Since injustice can only breed resentment and rejection, it must not be allowed to continue.

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Source: Reuters

Updated: 7 May 1998

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Printed: 7 May 1998

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## Business scene

■ The United Insurance Co recorded a net profit of JD 112,600 in 1997 compared with a loss of about JD 271,160 in 1996. Its insurance premiums reached JD 4,028 million against JD 6.64 million in the previous year. The company's total assets stood at JD 5.75 million last year compared with JD 6.93 million in 1996.

■ The Woolen Industries Co generated total profits estimated at JD 311,000 last year against JD 283,000 in 1996. This shows a rise of 9.9%. Also, the company's sales rose by JD 130,000 (10.8%) compared with the previous year. It plans to raise its sales of blankets to reach 110,000 pieces to meet market needs and expand its marketing base. The company's general assembly recommended a distribution of earnings at 10% of the share's nominal value among shareholders.

■ An agreement was concluded at the Ministry of Water to supply the hotel area of the Dead Sea's eastern coast with water. The JD 1.6 million contract was signed by the Jordan Valley Authority and Hussein Adyah Contracting Establishment. The project is part of a package of enterprises aimed at developing the Dead Sea's eastern coast. The agreement is targeted at financing the construction of a water pipeline 19.4 kilometers in length. The project, to be partly financed by the state's treasury, is due to be completed in 300 days.

■ The market value of the companies listed in the regular market at Amman Financial Market (AFM) reached about JD 3,730 billion by the end of last February compared with JD 3,283 billion in the same month last year.

Sources at AFM revealed that the book value of the listed companies at the regular market was nearly JD 2,245 million last February, against JD 1,863 billion in the same month last year. The market value of the listed industrial concerns at the regular market, recorded a slight rise, last February, moving from JD 1,236 billion to JD 1,247 billion. The total of shareholding companies listed at the regular market reached 98 concerns, among them 46 industrial firms, 19 services concerns, 17 insurance companies and 16 banks and financial establishments. However, the other shareholding companies listed at the parallel market were by the end of last February 47 companies, including 29 industrial firms, 16 services, one insurance and one financial establishment.

## Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 6 MAY

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US	0.7080	0.7100
UK	1.1570	1.1568
EUR	0.4124	0.4145
JPY	0.4801	0.4825
HKD	0.1227	0.1233
SGD	0.5624	0.5652
THB	0.3667	0.3685
MYR	0.0419	0.0421

## Insurance companies see light at end of tunnel

By Itham Sadeq  
Star Staff Writer

THE INSURANCE sector in Jordan faces new challenges in light of measures introduced by the Ministry of Industry to raise the capital of local companies to JD 2 million. Insurance firms were initially given till last October to put their house in order.

This "grace period" was extended for a further six months, which ended last April. But the snag continues. It was reported recently that several

companies still find themselves unable to comply with the law. Jordan's Insurance Federation President Dr Raouf Abu Jaber is expected to appeal for another six-month grace period.

Some insurance experts say that the Ministry's instructions to raise the capital is short-sighted because of the size of the market. They stress that 27 operating insurance entities competing in such a small market is unrealistic.

They also point out that this is the reason that companies lose money every year. They

complain, for instance, that the losses they have to bear, especially in car insurance, are due to the low rates of compulsory insurance. But the Ministry has recently responded and raised car insurance rates to help the companies minimize losses.

However, other experts suggest that insurance companies can find a more efficient way to operate in a healthy environment.

Mr Wahib Al Shaer, chairman of the Jordan and Gulf Insurance Company applauds the new Insurance Law amend-

ments passed in 1995, which allowed new companies to come to the scene.

"As a result of this law the number of insurance companies in Jordan increased from 17 to 27," he says.

Though such a step has been controversial with both supporters and detractors, Al Shaer personally supports the open door policy. Because in the long run, he says, it guarantees a more lively and competitive industry and helps provide better and cheaper insurance.

It's true that insurance rates become lower whenever a new company is established, as it continues to hunt for more clients by reducing rates, but in the end these companies often face significant losses as speculation about future business begins in excess notions of fair competition.

Despite the failure of existing companies to increase their capital, the same law doesn't ban the setting up of new insurance concerns. Small companies who remain unable to meet the JD 2 million barrier must decide whether to merge or close down.

The amendments are seen by Mr Ahmed Hussein, general manager of Al Quds Insurance Company as a step that is in line with Jordan's preparations for membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

But he realizes that this poses new challenges to the insurance industry in Jordan, as foreign companies are today allowed to own as much as 100 percent in many sectors, including insurance. Also, the insurance law stipulates that any foreign company, if it is opening a branch or nominating an agent in Jordan, has to deposit JD 4 million.

Clearly, it makes more financial sense for foreign insurers to establish independent insurance companies in Jordan.

Mr Hussein explains that total premium in the Kingdom is about \$100 million shared by 27 insurance companies investing more than \$90 million.

However, Dr Rajae Swiss, general manager of the Middle East Insurance Company puts the total premium in the country at about \$75 million "considering the real market size in Jordan, it is clear that the market at present is congested with a number of small companies which creates unhealthy competition."

But Al Shaer estimates the total premiums in 1996 at



Al Shaer

insurance staff and it is also hard to recruit foreign employees," he says.

While he adds that "calls for mergers among the existing companies are increasing, this is unlikely to occur, due to the absence of incentives." He points out that managers must give priority to the national welfare and abandon personal interests. They must allow for concessions, something which is absent and currently hinders mergers.

Statistics show that total insurance shareholders' equities at JD 75 million, whereas the annual insurance premium income in the market has not reached this figure. "It is obvious that there is a lot of idle capital in the insurance sector," Swiss continues.

However Al Shaer says that part of the reason companies have not been able to adjust their capital has to do with poor management which results in financial loss.

"The ground, therefore, is beginning to mature for mergers—this will reduce the number of companies in the market, and create larger and stronger institutions," Al Shaer says.

The limited size of the insurance market in Jordan is due to the lack of awareness of the importance of this sector, the domestic environment, and the absence of a more experienced base for these companies to operate in. ■

## Saab introduces latest line

SAAB, the Swedish car manufacturer, has introduced its latest line of cars, the 9-5, to the Jordanian market. The new car is designed to meet the needs of the Jordanian market, which is characterized by its unique climate and terrain. The 9-5 is a four-door sedan with a powerful engine and advanced safety features. It is expected to be a popular choice among Jordanian car buyers.

The distinguished march of Saab in developing unique and powerful cars in terms of design and performance. Mr. Swenson said the 9-5 car not only provides protection against accidents, but also enjoys the latest technologies and up-to-date, competitive specifications. Ahmad Qaradhi, the Sales Manager said the Central Exhibition Establishment has taken the necessary steps to mount a promotion campaign for the new car, noting that the maintenance center, which has recently been opened, is equipped with the latest technologies for car maintenance, in addition to having a large auto parts division. ■

## Dispute over central bank head could weaken euro

By Anne Swarbrick

BRUSSELS. Belgium—The angry dispute between France and Germany that delayed the birth of Europe's new currency for 11 hours Saturday may exact a price both political and economic, analysts said Sunday.

By agreeing to a last-minute compromise over naming the head of the new European Central Bank, the leaders of Europe may have dampened the appeal of their long-planned money. If the new currency, the euro, is weaker than hoped, that may lead to higher interest rates and slower economies.

And politically, the fledgling central bank gets off on the wrong foot entirely, experts said. Like the US Federal Reserve and the German Bundesbank, pillars of anti-inflation stability, the European Central Bank must rely on market credibility to oversee the new money. Yet the man nominated to be its first president was forced to begin his new role with what amounted to a lie, forced on him by the leaders of Europe—who themselves Sunday were all roundly criticized at home and by each other.

"In the end, the politicians will have to pay a price for what they have done," said Thomas Mayer, managing director of the Frankfurt, Germany, office of Goldman Sachs & Co.

Beginning with a Saturday lunch of Scottish salmon that stretched into Sunday morning, what was supposed to be the triumphant celebration of the birth of Europe's single currency turned into a brawl. France on the one hand and Germany, the Netherlands, Britain and everyone else on the other, were at a stalemate over who should head the European Central Bank and for how

long. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl pushed a Dutch candidate, Wim Duisenberg, and French President Jacques Chirac wanted his own central bank chief, Jean-Claude Trichet.

In the end, it was resolved with Duisenberg deciding "of my own free will" to leave in mid-2002 when the euro notes and coins are in full circulation. The leaders of the countries involved also insisted it was Duisenberg's desire to depart early.

Duisenberg's statement "wouldn't have been given, if there had not been pressure from the politicians," Mayer said. "In other words, the politicians exerted pressure on the first president of the central bank and he was forced to yield."

He would have said so when he was first nominated if he did not intend to serve a full mandate.

The feud embodied the competing visions of France and Germany that have shaped the EU for the nearly 50 years it and its predecessor institutions have existed. To Germany, still cognizant of the ruinous hyperinflation that preceded World War II, nothing is more important than low inflation and a strong mark, and the Bundesbank has total autonomy in ensuring those goals. The French prefer to have political hands on the levers of economic control and only freed their own central bank from political oversight a few years ago.

Analysts said Sunday that they expected the financial

markets to gyrate a bit Monday as a result of the dispute, and that in the longer run the stability of European currencies will depend on the credibility of the central bank. Some said the appeal of one money for 11 countries would encourage investment; others said the Duisenberg compromise might discourage investors. Although the euro will not officially exist as a financial

unit until January, some financial institutions plan to begin a "gray market" in euros immediately, trading financial instruments based on the new currency. In addition, trading in the currencies of the 11 member countries will reveal market confidence—or lack of it—in the central bank deal.

Politically, the imbroglio may have left lasting scars at a time when Europe most needs to show unity. No one came out looking good.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who presided over the euro's creation because Britain holds the rotating EU presidency, was criticized for not having laid the groundwork

for a compromise. Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi said Blair was "ill-prepared," according to Reuters.

Chirac was vilified for spoiling what should have been a celebration of the monetary union, along a French dream. And even though Kohl's bank candidate will take office, the chancellor went home appearing to have given in to the French as he faces national elections five months hence.

Kohl said he had lived "some of the most difficult hours" of his European experience. Hans-Olaf Henkel, head of the Federation of German Industry, said the outcome "casts a shadow over the central bank's much prized autonomy." The British Conservative Party accused Blair of a "spineless failure" that "betrayed the treaty of Maastricht, the founding document of monetary union. Britain will not participate in the euro, but its economy will be powerfully affected by it."

And Chirac was immediately targeted for excessive nationalism, a rare charge in France.

Chirac insisted during a news conference early Sunday morning that "this was not a French-German problem. This was a French-Netherlands problem." He made no bones about fighting for French interests, and had to be reminded in a note Finance Minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn slipped to him that the European Central Bank is, according to the Maastricht treaty, supposed to be run without regard for national interest. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

## Too soon to make light of Asia crisis

By Peter Montagnon

WHERE THE Asian crisis is concerned we can see some light at the end of the tunnel, says Gabriel Singson, governor of the Philippines' central bank. "The only trouble is that we're not sure if it's the light of an approaching train."

If Singson, demonstrating his famous sense of humor, has made a joke that hits home, it is partly because it reflects a widely prevailing sentiment at last week's Asian Development Bank annual meeting in Geneva. While delegates were keen to suggest the crisis sparked by last year's Thai baht devaluation is under control, there is also much unease about how it will play itself out.

Above all, there is acute awareness of the depth of recession facing Asian countries used to world record rates of growth.

One fear is that the failure of economies to recover will spark a new loss of confidence in financial markets or cause governments to let up on the difficult task of economic restructuring.

Even gloomy growth projections of the International Monetary Fund and ADB are regarded as far too optimistic by some. Thus the Institute of International Finance (IIF), a Washington-based think-tank funded by leading private sector financial institutions, reckons Indonesia's economy will shrink by 12.5 percent this year.

Even Malaysia, which is officially forecasting modest growth, will see economic output fall by 2 percent, while China's growth next year will

fall to 6.5 percent, well below the level seen by Beijing as necessary to allow for reform of banks and state enterprises.

"The credit squeeze is very severe and shows no sign of letting up," says Gregory Fager, the IIF's Asian economist. Nor would lower interest rates bring much relief, since the problem is less to do with the price of credit as its availability as the region's banks struggle to provide for bad loans and rebuild their capital.

Nor has the much vaunted rebound of exports materialized after Asia's devaluations as companies remain deprived of working capital.

Yet some international bankers are showing signs of impatience. They worry that South Korea is becoming complacent about restructuring now that its currency and reserves have recovered and that momentum has gone out of negotiations to solve the problem of Indonesia's private sector debt.

The trick for the authorities at last week's ADB meeting was thus to prevent despair taking over while also fighting unrealistic expectations of how quickly the crisis could be resolved.

According to Hubert Neiss, director of the IMF's Asia-Pacific department, most elements of Korea's rescue are in place. Market stability has been restored, capital account liberalization has been virtually achieved, and restructuring of the financial sector is on schedule. Only the fourth element—restructuring of large industrial groups—is to come.

The time is approaching when the IMF must reorient its Thai strategy toward economic

expansion now that it has dealt with hanking problems. But picking the moment involved some delicate choices. "If you hold on to restructuring policy for too long you put the economy in difficulties. If you relax too early you lose the hard-won gains."

Relaxation was always a matter of trial-and-error, Neiss said, but it was easier to act on the fiscal rather than monetary side, as cutting interest rates always risked destabilizing the exchange rate. Thailand, which has been crowding out the private sector by borrowing to support bank bailouts, might find resources for fiscal expansion by borrowing abroad.

Even in Indonesia, the gloom is not total. Cees de Koning, ADB Amro's country chief in Jakarta, acknowledged that progress on debt rescheduling was slow, but he said some entrepreneurs were repatriating assets from abroad to repay debts and there was also some evidence that trade finance was being restored to Indonesian companies.

Whether improvement comes quickly enough is another matter. In the background are continuing worries about the weakness of China's economy and the disappointing market impact of Japan's latest package. More radical solutions could yet be needed to ease the burden of private sector debt, while a yen collapse could still undermine the fragile calm that has descended on Asia. Then Singson's joke could turn out to be not very funny after all. ■

Financial Times Syndication

## MARKET WATCH

2-5 May

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	
<div>↑ %</div> <div>• Holiday</div>	<div>↑ %</div> <div>• Chemical Union Industry • Mineral Mine • National Industry</div> <div>4.50 4.43 2.70</div>	<div>↑ %</div> <div>• NAMCO • Al-Ask Investment • Universal Industry</div> <div>5.26 5.19 2.35</div>	<div>↑ %</div> <div>• International Trade • NAMCO • Arab Bank</div> <div>6.45 5.00 2.63</div>	
<div>↓ %</div> <div>• Holiday</div>	<div>↓ %</div> <div>• International Trade • Plastic Waving • Arab Paper Industry</div> <div>5.88 5.85 3.48</div>	<div>↓ %</div> <div>• Alkacen • Tadamon • National Salary House</div> <div>5.56 5.03 5.31</div>	<div>↓ %</div> <div>• Investment Bank • Jordan Investment Bank • Mineral Mine</div> <div>5.00 4.97 4.97</div>	
General Price Pointer		167,690	167,660	168,390
Trade Volume		594744	2244057	1059618
Stock Volume		497387	1563359	855298
Highest Traded Stocks				

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

## New marketing duo airborne

American Airlines and US Airways announced last week that they have agreed on a broad and innovative marketing relationship that will give customers of both airlines important new benefits, including easy access to their frequent traveler programs. American's AAdvantage and US Airways' Dividend Miles. "By joining hands, these two great airlines, each with its long history and loyal customers, will be positioned to strengthen their existing foundations today and to build on those foundations together in the months and years to come," said Stephen Wnif, US Airways chairman and CEO.

"This alliance is a good match for American and US Airways customers, because the two airlines' networks complement each other very well," said Bob Crandall, chairman and CEO of American. "US Airways has a strong presence throughout the northeastern United States, and between the northeast and Middle Atlantic states and the Southeast, including Florida. That presence nicely complements American's route network in the rest of the United States, the Caribbean and Latin America, Europe, and Japan. Combining the two airlines' networks by linking our frequent flyer programs opens a new range of possibilities to our customers."

Under the agreement announced for the first time, members who belong to both AAdvantage and US Airways' Dividend Miles will be able to combine miles from both to claim an award for travel on either airline. For example, a

traveller who belongs to both programs will be able to combine miles from Dividend Miles and Advantage to claim an award on American Airlines to Rio de Janeiro or on US Airways to Rome. AAdvantage members will be able to use their miles to claim awards on US Airways and, likewise, US Airways' Dividend Miles members will be able to use their program miles to claim awards on American. This will significantly expand the number of destinations available to members of both programs. AAdvantage members will also be able to earn Advantage miles as well as Dividend Miles on certain US Airways shuttle flights between Washington, New York and Boston. The two airlines also have agreed to allow reciprocal

09.1.1998



# All-night puppet shows bring life to ancient epics

By Frank Langfitt

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia—On the second Saturday evening of the month, hundreds of people gather here, as they have for centuries across Java, to watch an all-night shadow-puppet show.

The puppeteer—or "dalang"—takes his seat at 9 pm on a stage inside the walls of the Sultan's Palace and chooses the opening characters from among some 800 intricately chiseled, brightly painted leather puppets.

By lamplight, he spins the figures in his hands and casts shadows across a canvas screen while speaking the various parts in Javanese. Over the next nine hours, without interruption, he weaves an epic tale of noble kings and queens, vengeful demons and talking monkeys.

The shadow play, known as "wayang kulit," combines the drama of Greek mythology and the physical comedy of Warner Brothers cartoons with song, dance and Indonesia's ethereal "gamelan" music, which an orchestra taps out on gongs, drums and xylophones.

"I don't think it has any kind of parallel in the West," says Julia Redei, a German writer who is traveling through Indonesia.

The audience, mostly male between the ages of 20 and 40, makes itself at home in the humid auditorium.

Some doze on mats next to the stage, waiting for the crowd-pleasing clown scene—a Shakespearean device for comic relief that always comes after midnight.

Others lounge in the back on metal chairs, drinking bottled water, smoking sweet-smelling clove cigarettes, munching peanuts and tossing the shells on the floor.

The puppet show provides many Indonesians a chance to see characters they grew up with acting out familiar plots that pit good against evil and emphasize Javanese cultural values such as refinement, subtlety and self-discipline.

"It can be just entertainment, and sometimes we get a message we can apply to our lives," says Mujiono, a 45-year-old rice farmer who walks around outside during the performance to keep from falling asleep.

The wayang is an integral part of the culture of Java—the most populous and politically powerful of Indonesia's more than 17,000 islands.

Sukarno, the nation's founding father, occasionally tried his hand as a dalang. Suharto, the current president and longest-serving leader in Asia, is sometimes referred to as the master puppeteer of Indonesian politics because of his ability to pit potential rivals against one another and maintain power.

And as Indonesia—the world's fourth-most populous country—faces its worst crisis in decades, Suharto has found a political use for wayang kulit.

Government corruption and a weak banking system have sparked an economic meltdown that has sent the value of the nation's currency, the rupiah, plummeting and the prices of commodities soaring. Indonesians have responded with food riots and mass



Up: Indonesian puppet shows have a long history. Wooden puppets of the wayang kulit, await their turn to perform. Right: A Japanese shadow puppet. It is placed against a canvas screen backlit with lamp as the "dalang" or puppeteer, manipulates the puppets. Photo from LA Times-Washington Post

demonstrations on university campuses.

Under tremendous pressure to solve the problem, Suharto called for dalangs across the country to stage a shadow play last month to help inspire the nation's leaders to overcome the crisis.

The dalangs performed an episode from the Ramayana epic in which King Rama, his wife and brother are banished to a forest—a trying experience that draws them closer together. The episode is said to have inspired Suharto in the mid-1960s when he took control of the country after an abortive coup and began to form a new system of government.

"He's doing this to lift up people's spirits and, I assume, for some more mystical purposes," says William Liddell, a professor of political science at

Ohio State University.

The wayang is not inherently political, and Indonesia's strict authoritarian system would not permit it if it were. On occasion, though, dalangs offer gentle, oblique criticism of the nation's leaders in accordance with Javanese custom.

One of Indonesia's leading dalangs staged a scene a few years ago that says a lot about the underlying causes of the current crisis. In the play, a demon king tests the battle-readiness of his soldiers by clubbing them on the head one by one.

After he has struck two soldiers, a third steps up for his beating and hands the king an envelope filled with money. The king takes the cash, spares him the clubbing and sends the soldier off to battle.

"The president wasn't there on that occasion," recalls Tim Byard-Jones, who has studied shadow puppetry for the past decade and performs a wayang version of Shakespeare's "Henry V."

"But it got a huge round of applause."

The dalang is a multi-talented performer: singer, actor and improvisational comedian. Although the shows follow similar plots, the puppeteer invents much of the dialogue, altering the tone and even vocabulary of each character to reflect its personality and station in life.

Symbolism is everywhere. The lamp can be seen as a source of energy and the screen as the backdrop of life. The dalang holds good puppets in his right hand and bad ones in his left, although most share a mixture of traits.

The color of the puppets reveals their inner character, so it's easy to figure out who to root for in fight scenes even if you don't speak Javanese.

In one battle staged the other night, a demon guard with a red face—signifying anger—grappled with Rama's monkey ambassador, whose gold skin represents refinement.

Under the dalang's masterful guidance, the monkey floored the guard with a left uppercut. The dalang provided the sound effects by striking an iron plate with a small hammer he holds between his toes. A little boy in the second row giggled with delight.

The wayang is both steeped in tradition and a constantly evolving, popular performing art. Some dalangs have traded the old-fashioned trappings of battle scenes—swords and horses—for motorcycle and tank puppets. Fifty years ago, all dalangs used oil lamps. Now most work with electric lights; a few even use strobes for fight scenes.

To a change that recalls MTV's influence on music, the most popular dalangs now are the best puppeteers, because wayang is broadcast on national television. When wayang was available only on radio in the 1960s and 1970s, the top dalangs were the ones with the best voices.

The wayang, however, is losing popular appeal. A puppet show based on an ancient language that many people don't understand cannot compete in the age of "Titanic," which has been playing to packed houses here for the past couple of weeks.

Sapto Nugroho, 30, who works at a local university, says attendance at the Sultan's Palace has declined sharply since he first started coming to see puppet shows there as a teenager. Back then, you couldn't find a seat on Saturday nights.

"When I first came here, the place was so crowded, people were in the windows," Sapto recalls. "Maybe wayang, especially for younger people, isn't interesting anymore."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

## Shanghai's manure handlers Angels of health and happiness

"WHEN I started doing this job, I did not expect to become famous," says Pan Yinren. "I did not think I would turn out to be so popular or so well known." This is not so much modesty, as honesty. Pan is a night-soil worker and when he started out 40 years ago on a career shovelling excrement from the cesspools, soil-pipes and bedpans of Shanghai, he did not expect to become a celebrity.

But this is China, where the sewage worker and the laundry cleaner have a special place in the pantheon of the Communist party's anointed heroes. Over the years, the shurry-handlers who dredge and transport man-made manure from the city's latrines to fertilize crops in the countryside have proved an ideal medium by which to spread the message of the nobility of work.

There have been songs: "You are the angels of health and happiness... Cleaners of a new generation, I want to sing for you, sing for your beautiful spirit." Slogans celebrated their self-sacrifice: "Let one man be filthy, for the sake of 10,000 clean ones."

And, outside the Workers' Cultural Palace in Beijing, a life-size bronze statue of a chery laborer carrying a bucket of human stools now stands as a monument to the memory of China's most famous man of the night: Shi Chuanxiang.

In the 1950s, he was canonized as a "national model worker," and taught the vice-mayor of Beijing how best to clean out an overnight potty and carry a bucket full to the bin on his back.

Pan Yinren, too, is one of the chosen. The government newspapers have carried front-page poems to him and, earlier this year, he was selected as a member of the city's parliament, the Shanghai People's Congress.

Now he sits in his concrete-floored apartment in one of the rows of crumbling housing blocks on the outskirts of the city. The prosperity of economic reform has passed him by. He wears patched, baggy overalls, a faded Mao-style blue factory jacket, a blue cap and a pair of gum-boots.

Arthritis has started to twist his fingers and age has loosened the rough skin on his hands. He has a proud, distinguished face, with wispy owl's eyebrows and a ready smile that reveals teeth stained by a lifetime of tea and cigarettes.

He has also mastered the model worker's pique. When

asked whether he minds the inevitable stench, he responds: "I do not fear the filth! I do not fear the tiredness! I do not fear the smell! This is work that has to be done for the people. I want to serve the nation." This with a glance for approval at the local party official who has offered to join us for the afternoon.

"I want to be a night soil worker all my life."

Unfortunately for the night soil workers, though, the industry is in trouble. In its heyday, during the first half of the century, night soil collectors would bid for the right to pick up Shanghai's excrement, which used to pile up in the municipal latrines or be left out by the city's residents in ceramic urns or wooden buckets. It was then sold to the farmers of the Yangtze delta.

To get technical about it, some stools were better than others. Night soil was priced in six categories, with the nutrient-rich effluent of Shanghai's wealthy meat-eating classes considered top grade dung, while the human waste from the working-men's slums, where diets were restricted to little more than rice porridge, was cheapest.

Over time, there were innovations, such as mechanized trucks rather than hand-pushed barrows; pumps to empty the municipal cesspools, replaced men with shovels; and the arrival of indoor plumbing. Some things stayed the same. The revolution eradicated class, but the classification of night soil continued. "We used to taste it to test it," he says, dipping a finger into an imaginary bucket. A dab on the tongue would tell you if it was salty (good quality) or bland (bad quality). Thankfully, that task has disappeared with the introduction of an automatic measuring device.

The spread of chemical fertilizers has done most to undermine the profession. There are a few farmers who still swear by the superior fertilizing qualities of the man-made product, but, says Pan, "most of the farmers use chemicals nowadays... and most of the night soil goes through the pipes and into the sewers."

The decline of the industry



has done little to dampen the Communist party's passion for the night soil worker. As China modernizes, the party has lurching into a nostalgic search for models that personify the leadership's stated goal of building "socialist spiritual civilization."

Workers are paraded as exemplars of this woolly notion of thrift, decency and the old party values. For example, Xu Hu, Shanghai's finest plumber, Wang Tao, the model mechanic, and Li Suli, Beijing's best bus conductor, have been plucked from obscurity as personifications of the model worker.

But the state-sponsored icons mean little to modern-day Shanghaiese. The youngsters' heroes are Fan Zhiyi, the footballer with a colorful private life, or Michael Jordan, the Chicago Bulls' basketball star. And bigger than them all is the actor "Liangnadio" (Li Caprio); clean cut, perfumed, sanitized and a long way from the life of Pan Yinren.

Perhaps Pan should be grateful for the neglect. Of all China's lionized night soil workers, Shi Chuanxiang's fame burned brightest, but his fall from grace was swift and brutal. During the Cultural Revolution, he suffered repeated beatings and died a humiliated man.

As he cycles through his neighborhood, with rods, shovels, brushes and plunger strapped to his bike, Pan goes by all but unnoticed. One woman on her way to a street market, though, spots him. It is the man who clears blocked drains.

Financial Times Syndication

By Howard Schneider

IUVJIVIK, Quebec—As a boy in Quebec's icy north, Pita Aatami lived in a house without electricity, gathered wood for warmth, melted chunks of ice for water and viewed that as progress. At least his generation, he reasoned, was out of the igloo.

"It would be tough to go back," said Aatami, 37, "and wake up cold."

From a childhood in which a special treat was a slice of makak, skin taken fresh from a beluga whale, Aatami today pays as much attention to the Dow Jones average as he does to the success of a local whale, seal or caribou hunt. As treasurer of the Inuit-run Makivik Corporation, established to manage the proceeds of a 20-year-old land claim settlement, he oversees, among other ventures, a \$60 million securities portfolio that spans the North American economy.

And just as the culture, diet and fortunes of Quebec's 14 small Inuit villages remain tied to the success of its hunters, so, too, are they linked to Aatami's ability to snare a buck on the stock market. One puts food on the table; the other provides money for community recreation and economic development projects. Both are critical to the province's 8,000 Inuit—known to much of the world as Eskimos, a term considered pejorative here—as they try to sustain their traditions along the harsh Quebec coastline settled by their ancestors several thousand years ago, while at the same time sharing in the rest of Canada's more recent material progress.

The resulting contrasts are stark: News of one hunter's success at the local seal hole still created a buzz even as Makivik board members, here for the corporation's annual meeting, discussed the management of their Air Inuit airline and other subsidiary companies.

The cultural tensions are real: The youth in Iuvjivik, a village of 280 people on the shores of the Hudson Strait, are steeped in the lore of rock singer Marilyn Manson and smitten with "America's Funniest Home Videos," piped into homes since last fall when the town was wired for cable television.

Makivik's track record, as with any institutional endeavor, is mixed. The successful Air Inuit service, for example, not only turns a small profit but provides daily flights and emergency medical service in an area where access to the rest of the world during a nine-month winter is otherwise unpredictable. But Makivik's attempts to commercialize caribou meat

Cobbling together culture fractured by plans for changing future

## Inuit find modernized world breeds hardship

proved a money loser when the herd migrated away from a series of slaughterhouses built along the tundra.

Whatever the mistakes and tensions, Aatami said, the challenge remains to blend traditional culture with a modern cash economy in a way that allows for self-sufficiency under the one without surrendering the history, relationships and language of the other.

"Yesterday somebody got eight seals. Without them you can't survive up here," Aatami said. "We also see how other people live down south... Nobody can go back to the way the ancestors lived, but we'll always be Inuit, regardless of what age we are in... We're in a harsh environment, but it's a culture that will stick around even if we are using powerboats instead of kayaks, or Ski-dos instead of dog teams."

Coast to coast, from downtown Vancouver to the plains of Alberta to the northern expanses of Quebec, Canada and its original residents are struggling with some variation on that theme: how, 500 years after the initial European landing, to create a relationship that provides aboriginal communities with the tools to thrive in a modern society, without also requiring assimilation.

As in the United States, there is a list of historical insults and modern-day dilemmas to confront. The issues tend to be higher on Canada's agenda, however, because the native population is proportionally larger than in the United States and is spread more significantly across the country. In addition, because of the history of treaty negotiations here, there are still outstanding aboriginal claims to large chunks of land, as well as forest, fishing and mineral rights across the country.

The courts have been sympathetic since the early 1970s, gradually expanding the legal tools that Canada's natives have at



Children welcoming a plane's arrival to remote Iuvjivik are caught between Inuit tradition and modern culture beamed in via newly installed cable television. photo by Howard Schneider.

their disposal. And last January, Indian Affairs Minister Jane Stewart issued a statement of reconciliation from the government meant to atone for issues such as the abuse Indians suffered in government-run schools or, more relevant to the Arctic-dwelling Inuit, the forced settlement of various groups on land chosen by federal bureaucrats.

Such policies, Indian and Inuit leaders say, contributed to the disastrous suicide, substance abuse and poverty rates in abo-

original communities. People struggled with the fact that they were not allowed to pursue their traditional lifestyle, but neither were they fully equipped to create a modern one.

Government and aboriginal leaders alike agree that one way to combat that situation is to make native communities more autonomous—to substitute private or group effort for government help and swap Ottawa's oversight for more locally based decisions.

Taking concepts that are often enshrined in romantically democratic language and making them work in practice are two different things, however, as Makivik executives and the people of Iuvjivik and neighboring communities will attest.

The Inuit of this area, scattered north of the 55th Parallel, in the 1970s negotiated one of the first modern land claim settlements: In conjunction with Cree Indians elsewhere in the province, they agreed to let Quebec's provincial utility company, Hydro-Quebec, begin damming rivers in return for a cash settlement.

The money, more than \$75 million for the Inuit, was part of an era of rapid change that replaced igloos and caribou-skin tents with government-subsidized housing and established transportation and communications links that ended the Inuit's isolation for good.

In 1960, the people of this village spoke only the Inuktitut dialect, and the only European faces were those of a missionary priest and a federal schoolteacher deposited here with a year's worth of rations. Today, the brightest students are at least passably trilingual—Inuktitut, English and French—and Inuit leaders are pushing for federal infrastructure funds to boost regional tourism with a series of ports.

Makivik President Zebedee Nungak said that by today's negotiating standards, the agreement with Hydro-Quebec seems like a trinkets-for-land deal, hardly in line with the revenue that northern hydroelectric projects mean for one of the continent's largest utilities. But it helped provide momentum and money for a movement that, he feels, is evolving into greater self-reliance for aboriginals across Canada.

Just as Inuit in the eastern part of the Northwest Territories inherit their own government next year with the creation of

a new self-governing territory called Nunavut, Nungak said he is now discussing with provincial and federal officials the possibility of such an arrangement for northern Quebec.

"We have... created a climate in which it is no longer a novelty to have institutions rearrange their situations to accommodate an aboriginal people," Nungak said. "The basic attempt is to bring government much closer to the people." While many of the changes are welcome—Aatami was not alone in preferring heated dwellings to igloos—others are not.

"Village elders like Lizzy Nauya see pros and cons: Yes, her house is warm, but the sense of community is weaker, as are the traditions passed on to succeeding generations. 'We are living like the white people are,' Nauya said, 'but it is not better.'"

The conflict is apparent as well in the comments of high school students such as Charlie Tarqik Mangiuk, who has mixed an admiration of Marilyn Manson's rebelliousness—"Bottom line, nobody tells him what to do"—with the very traditional goal of staying with his people and hunting. Or in those of his classmate, Pita Qalango, who may be headed south to pursue college but is a little unnerved by how television affected village life.

"When the cable came, it was a little scary," Qalango said. "The streets were empty" because everyone was inside watching.

Many core undertakings remain disputed at the most fundamental level—most notably regarding education. Evolution, for example, is not taught in the school here, according to teachers, because of an evangelical Christianity that took root through the work of missionaries.

School director Peter Analik said that, if asked by a student whether to stay in school or learn to hunt and harvest the land, he would be hard-pressed to justify class time.

"Look at our land. It is black and white—that is all," Analik said.

"You don't survive if you don't know about it. We don't plant, and we don't have farms... The hunters, when they get an animal, they invite everybody to eat. The fact is, said Aatami, that few Inuit are ready to give up tradition—including pleasures like makak, even if the style of enjoying it has changed with the times.

"These days," he said, "a lot of people use soy sauce."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



# The Star

Edited by Abdul-Hamid Adnani

## Lebanon victory sparks major celebration Al Riyadi takes Asian bronze

BEIRUT, LEBANON—Al Riyadi returned to Lebanon this morning with the bronze medal after taking third position in the Asian Basketball Championship.

Al Riyadi took the third place after playing Hyundai Dinetie (Southern Korea) in the game that determined the third and fourth positions.

Sporting defeated Hyundai Dinetie by 10 points 87-77 after leading at the half 51-36.

Al Riyadi led for most of the game and performed much better than Hyundai Dinetie.

Al Riyadi would have played against this team in the semi-final and reached the final easily had they not lost to Toshiba Red Thunders in the 1st round. They took 2nd position in their group due to that defeat and played against the Chinese team in the semi-final instead of challenging them in the final. Al Riyadi's result in this tournament wasn't enough for the Lebanese team, who received two additional awards.

The first was for Elie Naser, who took the best 6th man award, and the second was for Michael Cumberland who was selected as the Most Valuable Player in the tournament. The team will be celebrating through the week at the Al Riyadi Club, Manara, in Lebanon.



Michael Cumberland (MVP)

## Midfielder Reyna capable of bringing it all back home US team puts fate in hands of 'future'

ATLANTA—If there's a question mark over the future of soccer in the United States, the answer may lie in Claudio Reyna.

The 24-year-old, midfielder player is regarded as one of the most talented players the US has ever produced—and now, he'll get the chance to showcase those talents to the world, this time with the added pressure of "leading" an experienced American team at the World Cup finals in France.

Claudio's now at an age where he has enough experience and leadership ability to take a team on his shoulders and make something of it," said US coach Steve Sampson.

"The older players have a very high regard for Claudio," said Sampson.

So it seems the promise of the star player from the University of Virginia has been realized in the professional ranks, but the transformation took time.

Bayer Leverkusen, a German club, gave him his first break in 1994, but his career stalled as he spent more time on the bench than on the playing field. A move to rival Wolfsburg followed last season, and now Reyna has finally started to show his real worth.

"It's given me a confidence that I didn't have when I wasn't playing every week," said Reyna. "Then, I'd be a substitute one time or play only a little. You don't have the same confidence that you do when you play every week and you do well against good competition."

"Once he moved to Wolfsburg," added Sampson, "he gained a level of confidence I've never seen in him before. He's taking the free kicks, he's taking the corner kicks, he's the playmaker in midfield, he's really the 'go-to' guy. He's scoring goals in the flow of the game and he's communicating on the field and telling people where to go, and that's very positive for him, for me, and especially for the team."

Reyna also brings experience to the US team—he's played in more than 50 internationals and two Olympics—and was on the World Cup

needed a playoff victory to get into the World Cup for the first time. And the small, boomerang-shaped country on the Adriatic Sea has less people than many countries in the tournament have registered soccer players.

Still, the Croats have plenty of talent and are considered by far the best World Cup rookies. "If we pass the first round, I guarantee that we can beat anyone," captain Zvonimir Boban said.

Boban, Davor Suker and Robert Prosinecki formed the hub of the under-20 Yugoslav national team that won that age group's World Cup in Chile in 1987.

When Yugoslavia violently broke up into independent states in 1991, the three doffed the traditional Yugoslav blue and donned the red-and-white checkered shirts of their native Croatia to guide an extremely gifted crop of players.

The fledgling nation has 24 wins, 10 draws and only seven losses, including convincing victories over three-time World Cup champion Italy, ex-European champion Denmark, and Spain. Croatia defeated Ukraine in a two-game series last November for a berth in France.

The World Cup, which begins June 10, is the second major tournament the Croats have qualified for in their first attempt. In 1996, they made it into the European Championship and reached the quarterfinals, where they

## Croatia is World Cup 'dark horse'



were edged out by Germany, the tournament's eventual winner.

Indeed, if the Croats can advance out of their first-round World Cup group, which also includes Argentina and rookies Japan and Jamaica, they may have an upset or two in them.

"I'm full of energy and my optimism is as hard as granite," coach Miroslav Blazevic said. "Croatia boasts a class like few other nations."

Croatia's stars are spread out across the globe. Of the team's starting 11, only goalkeeper Drazen Ladice and Prosinecki, are based in the country.

Boban, who also plays for AC Milan, is a linchpin in the midfield. Lanky forward Alen Boksic is the sting behind a potent attack-line. He helped lead Italian powerhouse Juventus to a league title last year and is now in peak form for Rome's Lazio.

Some have described the Croats as Europe's Brazil for their fluid and unpredictable style, but critics have noted the lack of discipline and stamina.

Much of Croatia's fortunes lie with Prosinecki, an on-off chain-smoker with dexterous ball control and imaginative passes. He has had a renaissance since returning to mother club Croatia Zagreb last season. Lately, however, the 29-year-old has been battling a nagging back injury and erratic form that also marred his stints at Spanish giants Real Madrid and Barcelona a few years ago.

As for coach Blazevic, he is a master psychologist and staunch nationalist. These days his greatest problem is keeping his stars' egos in check. In past games, he has talked of the homeland war and turmoil left in its wake to muse his ensemble of millionaires. The players were outside the country during the war and were not affected, although many were involved in humanitarian projects and sent money to victims back home.

The country, now mired in social and economic troubles, is hoping for a morale boost with a good showing in the World Cup, and that has put a lot of pressure on the team. The high demands concern Alija Asanovic, who also plays for Napoli in Italy. He thinks an appearance in the world's most-watched sporting event is inspiration enough.

In fact, like many others, he sees the Cup as a way to land the biggest contract of his career. "The national side has always been a stage where my potential is most visible," Asanovic said. "I believe that's how it will be in France."

## Song may sound victory for Cameroon squad

YAOUNDE—With his distinctive dreadlocks and standing tall in his red boots, Rigobert Song is sure to turn a few heads at the World Cup finals this summer. But it will not be just his appearance that catches the attention of observers, rather the consummate skill of a confident 21-year-old.

Song was a raw 17-year-old when he played at the last World Cup finals in the United States as a surprise selection in a team torn by internal disputes.

Now four years on, he has developed into an elegant defender who has the world at his feet. Song will go to the World Cup finals fresh from his best season yet with French title chasers Metz and having taken over the captaincy of the Cameroon team.

Song has a big responsibility in leading a country whose fans demand a return to the giant-killing performances of Italy, eight years ago and he believes the new-look Cameroon team has the capability to captivate the world of soccer again.

Cameroon mentioned in the same breath as we were before," he said.

Song, who hails from Yaounde, is a graduate of Cameroon's under-20 team which went to the 1993 World Youth Cup in Australia. He was just 16 at the time, but captained the team that included nine players who went on to win full international caps.

His game was modelled on that of his childhood hero, the Dutch sweeper Ronald Koeman. "I used to write his name on the back of my shirts," said Song, who moved to Metz straight after the World Cup in the US and very quickly won a place on the first team. His defensive capabilities have been among the major reasons why the team, from Lorraine have been title contenders for



much of the French season. But at national team level, it has not been a rosy with Cameroon disappointing in the US and also falling at the last two African Nations Cup finals.

Song was one of few highlights for the Indomitable Lions in Burkina Faso in February and knows matters can only improve now that Frenchman Claude Le Roy has taken over as coach.

## Premier League split on ticket revenues To play or not to play

By Abdul-Hamid Adnani  
Special to the Star

THE JORDAN Football Association (JFA) decided to suspend the Premier League (PL) Championship. The decision followed a similar one by seven of the ten competing teams Thursday at Al Ahli club over their demand that revenues from ticket sales be reallocated.

The seven clubs are demanding an equal distribution of money from ticket sales among the ten clubs without regard for the number of fans attending each club's matches.

They made an official appeal to the Jordanian Football Federation, whose spokesman Mohammed Hamdan, said that because he appreciated the role of the clubs he had decided to form a special committee to look into the clubs' demands on 11 May. Hamdan's decision, however, didn't satisfy the seven clubs, who decided not to participate in Premier League games until the Federation deals with their demands in a more timely manner.

The current method of revenue distribution favors those teams that enjoy high levels of popularity. Teams that draw fewer fans end up with a share of revenues that some say is not sufficient to run the club.

Al Wihdat and Shabab Al Hussein for their parts have said that the current method of revenue sharing is fair. It is well known that Al Wihdat has the biggest number of fans in Jordan. Shabab Al

Hussein club president Ali Kober said that he believes, therefore, that it is fair that Al Wihdat takes the biggest share of revenues. Both clubs threatened that they may withdraw from the league if the Federation changes the current method of distributing revenues.

Al Jazeera club took a neutral position when its president Abdullah Kiswani urged HRH Prince Abdullah, president of the JFA to resolve the deadlock over the suspension of the Premier League Championship.

It is noteworthy that the suspension of the league will kill the enthusiasm of the spectators who attended the

first and second weeks in good numbers. These spectators will soon be busy watching the World Cup finals in France, which will provide heavy competition for the attentions of local fans.

Also, the national team's preparations for the Arab Cup qualifiers and the coming Pan Arab Games held in Amman in 1999 will be affected if Premier League Championships finish late because of the current controversy.

Should Premier League Championships be cancelled in order to provide sufficient practice time for the National Team to retain the Pan Arab title they won last year?

## Jarar leads pack in third speed race

AMMAN (Star)—The Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) continues its series of speed races with a third contest sponsored by Pepsi-Cola.

Jordanian driver Yaser Jarar, who scored the best time in the previous race took advantage of Gaith Belbesi's absence and came in on top with a time of 2:22.37 min. Belbesi is one of Jordan's toughest drivers and was the winner of the previous race. Edmir Shishuni and Amir Al Najjar took 2nd and 3rd places with times of 2:27.51 min and 2:27.95 min.

In addition to Belbesi, the race witnessed the absence of good drivers like Ahmad Dawoud and Yanal Kumoak. No female participation was recorded.

Prizes for the winners were awarded by RAJC Director Hassan Alaa El Dein at the end of the race.



## MONDIAL NEWS

### FIFA nervous about bribes

LONDON—Soccer's governing body is worried about the possibility of bribes at this summer's World Cup. FIFA's acting General Secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen said the 32 participating teams will be given detailed warning from officials and that security

teams would be placed in the hotels of players and referees.

But he admitted detection would be difficult. "If you bribe a defender and he provokes an unnecessary penalty, nobody will know," Zen-Ruffinen told London's Sunday Times.

"The most serious problem we have had so far was in the under-17s World Cup competition in Qatar in 1995," he added.

"We were contacted by coaches in the hotels who said some of their players had spent time in rooms with people coming in them offering gifts. They weren't asking for anything in exchange."

The newspaper said gangs behind the potential bribes were based in Asia, where millions will be bet on every game. The quarterfinal games are believed to be particularly susceptible.

Peter Velappan, head of the Asian Football Confederation, said match-fixing syndicates had targeted the quarterfinals of the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

The newspaper said referees would be placed under guard in their hotels. It said referees traveling to matches outside Paris would be accompanied by FIFA officials.

### Ba confident of place on French squad

PARIS—French winger Ibrahim Ba says he can't imagine that he won't be selected when France announces its World Cup team this week.

Ba said he was confident the French team had a chance to win the World Cup. But he added that the team needed to be balanced and calm in order to play well.

"I have the French team in my heart, I know I am ready," Ba said in an interview that appeared Sunday in the French weekly newspaper, *Le Journal du Dimanche*.

Ba also said he thought this year's team was stronger than in 1986, when it was led by soccer star Michel Platini, now the head of the French Organizing Committee.

French trainer Aimé Jacquet is expected to announce his choices for the French World Cup team on Tuesday.

"I can't imagine not being in the World Cup," Ba said.

### Klinsmann mum on future plans

LONDON—German star Juergen Klinsmann won't discuss his future with the English club Tottenham—his second stint with the team—until after the World Cup.

Klinsmann, who scored four goals Saturday in a 6-2 win over Wimbledon that virtually assured Tottenham of staying in the Premier League, has had a difficult relationship with coach Christian Gross.

"I don't want to say anything about that now because there was so much said in the last few weeks before I left the first time," said Klinsmann.

Klinsmann arrived at Tottenham four months ago on a short-term contract.

"All I want to say is that today was certainly one of the most exciting games of my career in 16 years as a professional. It was a wonderful feeling."

Gross, however, indicated Klinsmann would probably not return.

"No, there is no chance of talking to him about staying because it was always the agreement that he would leave at the end of the season," Gross said.

### Stuttgart striker Bobic out with injuries

STUTTGART, Germany—Fred Bobic, Stuttgart's striker who hopes to make Germany's World Cup squad, will be sidelined for about 10 days after injuring ligaments in his left ankle, his club said Sunday.

Bobic will miss the last round of the Bundesliga next weekend and is unlikely to fit for Stuttgart's Cup Winners Cup game against Chelsea on May 13 in Stockholm.

Bobic will not need surgery. He was injured in Stuttgart's 4-2 loss at Karlsruhe in a Bundesliga game Saturday.

### Konsel doubtful for Austria World Cup bid

ROME—Austrian goalkeeper Michael Konsel's status for the World Cup is in doubt after he injured himself during practice with his club.

Konsel, 36, pulled a muscle in his lower left leg at the end of AS Roma's training session Saturday, as he dived to block a shot. He was held out of Roma's match against AC Milan on Sunday and is likely sidelined for the rest of the Serie A season.

The veteran's injury could take as long as a month to heal, the Roma team doctor said.

Konsel is one of the top players on Austria's squad for France '98, where the country is bracketed with Italy, Chile and Cameroon in the first round.

### Brazilian midfielder dazzles in Tunisian debut

SOUSSE, Tunisia—Brazilian Jose Clayton, who took Tunisian nationality in March, made an impressive debut in a 1-1 draw in a friendly international against Georgia on Saturday.

Imed ben Younes scored for Tunisia 11 minutes from time to equalize a 40th minute goal by Manchester City's Georgi Kinkladze.

Midfielder Clayton has been playing in Tunisia for four years.

Tunisia was missing out-of-favour-but-talented playmaker Zoubier Beya who earned the displeasure of coach Henry Kasparczak with

a display of petulance after being substituted at the African Nations Cup final in February.

Tunisia is in group G at the World Cup finals along with England, Romania and Colombia.

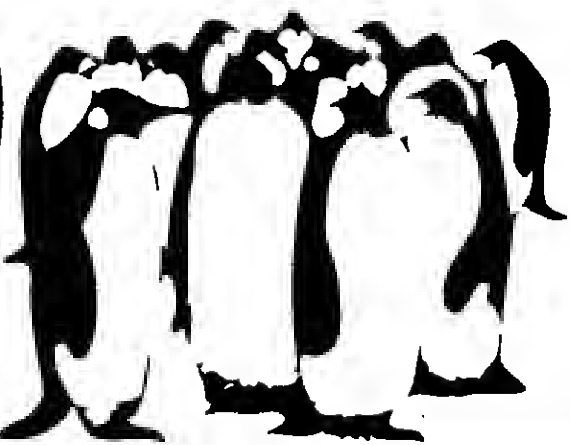


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AROUND  
TOWNJerusalem  
Intermarkets receives  
Al Sawsanah Award

JERUSALEM INTERMARKETS, a local advertising agency has been given the Al Sawsanah Award for Creativity from Jordan Television. This was in recognition of the new logo that the agency designed for Jordan Television's 30th anniversary. Jerusalem Intermarkets is well established agency which has branches in most Arab countries.



World mourns passing of Nizar Qabbani

Charting path of 20th  
century Arab poetryBy Marwan Asmar  
Star Staff Writer

The Arab world lost this week one of its greatest poets of the 20th century. Nizar Qabbani was laid to rest in his hometown, Damascus, having died in London where he was undergoing treatment for a serious illness.

Syrian-born Qabbani leaves an indelible mark on Arab culture and poetry. A strident figure in both his thoughts and writings—something which literary specialists will no doubt insist are sources of controversy—his great contribution to charting out the path of Arab poetry in the 20th century will be preserved along with other great masters.

His rich life, having now drawn to a close at the age of 75, began on 21 March 1923 in Damascus at a time of major social, political and economic upheavals. Although he obtained a law degree in 1943, and subsequently served as a diplomat, his interest in poetry—kindled when Qabbani was still a schoolboy—never flagged.

He was taught this love—and the craft through which best to express it—at the hands of the late Khalil Mardun, a poet of great stature. During that time, Mardun instilled in the young Qabbani the art of critical appreciation. Qabbani, already an accomplished poet as a teenager, published his first collection of poems in 1942.

Although he served between 1945 and 1965 as a career diplomat in London, Cairo, Beirut, Peking and Madrid, his love of literature never wavered. It was during this time that he began to sharpen his critical faculties, concentrating on topical themes that were hidden in the human psyche. Also during this time, he published a large number of collections of his poems.

But these were mingled with the burning social and political issues of the day. Qabbani felt that women were one of the most exploited beings in society, and devoted a good proportion of his prose to the female sex.

He concentrated on the body form, and the very aura of women who, in their gentleness and emotional intensity, acted as a veritable wellspring of inspiration.

But critics who see his poetry as one-dimensional in this respect do him a great injustice. After 1965 he retired from the diplomatic service, and became a full-time poet.

This is arguably the outset of Qabbani's twilight years. It was during this period that the reader began to feel what might be characterized as the "personal outrage" that came through in his poems. He wouldn't accept Arab defeat in the 1967 war, and openly blamed Arab regimes. Hence his thoughts and beliefs concentrated on what he called the Arab political malaise.

He always believed that this was related to the socio-political climate in the Arab world. He says what Arab people need is greater democracy and more freedom of expression, bitterly complaining at the same time that "the fingers of the Arab human being and breath



has been cut off, tongue cut off, lips taken out, ears taken out...

Qabbani wrote endlessly about Beirut, about the Qana massacre, and the Palestinians, the tragedy of Palestine and the children of the stones of the Intifada.

It was during the late '60s and onwards that his popularity broadened. This was a natural result of the approach that he brought to his prosody. By all accounts, Qabbani was a modernist. Indeed many say that he dragged Arab poetry from its ancient forms into the modern world. This he did by popularizing it, making it topical, pertinent and emotionally accessible to the man in the street as well as to the artist and intellectual.

His poems are sung and have been recorded by Arab greys such as the late Um Kalthoum and Abdel Haleem Hafiz. Today they are sung by Majda Al Rouni, and Kathim Al Saher.

His language, syntax, and form, his intonation and general style were done in a way that appealed to people, male and female, young or old—an appeal that is emblematic of the generosity with which Qabbani opened up and offered to the world his whole being, with a style that identifies him as a master of his idiom.

A drawing of "Qare'a't Al Fenjan" (Fortune-teller, one of Qabbani's poems that become most famous when it was sung by the late Abdel Haleem Hafiz.



Patriarch of Latin American culture dies

## Soliloquy for an uncanny soul

By Natasha Twal  
Special to the Star

On Sunday 19 April 1998, Mexico lost its eminent laureate, 1990 Nobel Prize winner and patriarch of Latin American culture, Octavio Paz, at age 84.

Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo announced Paz's death early on Monday, 20 April, as Zedillo was returning from the Summit of the Americas in Chile. "We have lost our greatest thinker and poet," said Zedillo, commenting on Paz's death. He did not give a cause of death or say exactly when the author died.

Paz is best known for two of his earlier works: the book-length essay *The Labyrinth of Solitude* and the poem "Sunstone."

*The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950) is an explication of Mexico's national character. The book describes Mexican history as a search for "our own selves, deformed or masked by strange institutions," he later explained to a friend.

"Sunstone" (1957), the poem he is most famous for, is a harsh critique of what he said was the proud apathy common among Mexicans. It was inspired by the monumental circular stone on which the Aztec calendar is inscribed.

His best-known book of poetry is *Liberad Bajo Palabra*, published in 1949. Paz was born on 31 March, 1914 and

grew up at the edge of Mexico City. He attributed his early interest in literature to his grandfather, a strongly anti-clerical army general, playwright, lawyer and journalist.

Paz's father, who identified himself as a socialist, was a secretary to Emiliano Zapata, the mythic peasant leader of Mexico's early twentieth century revolution.

When he was only 16, Paz published his first poem; his first essay followed a year later. He went to Law School at Mexico City's National Autonomous University, where he joined a Marxist student group. He married a young writer, Elena Garro, with whom he had a daughter.

In 1937 Paz traveled to Spain to join a congress of anti-fascist writers. He stayed in Spain after the congress and joined the leftist-dominated Republican forces fighting rightist General Francisco Franco.

After returning to Mexico City, he accepted a scholarship to study at the University of California, Berkeley, and worked in New York translating Hollywood scripts into Spanish.

In 1946 he was nominated as the cultural attaché d'affaires in Japan before becoming ambassador to India in 1962. He resigned that post in protest when the Mexican army crushed an anti-government movement and killed more than 300 students in 1968. "It

would be difficult to represent a government under these circumstances," he told reporters in New Delhi at the time.

Paz always thought of himself as a socialist, yet since he was not afraid to criticize the left, he was eventually ostracized by them. His criticism of Fidel Castro's Cuba especially drew the ire of leftist intellectuals.

Paz's marriage to Elena Garro ended angrily after two decades, and in 1966 he married Maria Jose, who remained his love until his dying day.

In 1976, Paz founded a Mexican journal "Vuelta" which became one of Latin America's most prestigious literary magazines.

The poet also received the most important award in the Spanish-speaking world, the Cervantes Prize, in 1981.

Paz was a genuine poet, essayist and also a great humanist. His poetic corpus is nourished by the belief that poetry constitutes, as American poet Eliot Weinberger said about Paz's work, "the secret religion of the modern age."

His loss is indeed a tragic one, not only for the Mexican people, but also for those people who value the intersecting worlds of the intellect and the imagination, most especially the uncanny way Paz seemed able to weave these into a deeply felt whole.

## THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Look here, McGinnis—hundreds of bright copper kettles, warm woolen mittens, brown paper packages tied up with string... Someone was after a few of this guy's favorite things."



Andre Lafleur: cactus tamer

## AGENDA

■ **Homage to Federico Garcia Lorca**  
Instituto Cervantes is presenting through the month of May a program of films, lectures, music and readings in homage to Andalusian poet Garcia Lorca. Schedule as follows:

May 7—*El balcón abierto* (1984) Film in Spanish based on Lorca's life and poetry, in which certain of his characters take on a life of their own. At Instituto Cervantes (near third circle, behind the InterContinental Hotel) 5 pm

May 10/11—Lorca was not only a poet and dramatist—he also composed music. Guitarist Rafael Serrallero performs Lorca's work in two concerts. The first, on May 10, will be held in the Union Bank Hall in Shmel-sani at 5 pm. The second, on May 11, will be performed at Instituto Cervantes at 8 pm.

May 11—lectures by Drs. Mahmud Ali Makdi and Abdel Aziz open an exhibition of Lorca's books translated into Arabic along with more than 50 photographs of the poet. At Instituto Cervantes, 6 pm  
May 14—*Bodas de sangre* (1981) film version of a Lorca play. Surreal drama in which a bridegroom and the mysterious "Leonardo" fight and mortally wound each other in the presence of the bride. In Spanish only, at Instituto Cervantes, 5 pm. A second screening of the film—this one with English subtitles, and called *Blood Wedding*—takes place May 17, at 5 pm.

■ **American Arts Festival, May 10-13**  
The first American Arts Festival, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, takes place over the course of four days at the American Center. Schedule as follows:

May 10—exhibition by jewelry artist Suzanne El Masry opens at 6 pm in the American Center Exhibition Halls, and runs until May 25. Ms El Masry will also conduct a workshop, "New Jewelry Design Techniques," on May 13. For further information, call, 592 0101, ext. 2579

Also on May 10, an exhibition of sculpture by Samer Tabbaa will open at the

American Center at 6 pm, and continue through May 25. A critic noted that Samer's pieces "stun the layman, confuse other artists, and inspire writers."

May 11—Guitar concert by Jad Azkoul. Program includes pieces by Villa-Lobos, and Lourival Silvestre. In the American Center Courtyard, 7 pm. On May 12, Mr Azkoul will give a workshop at the National Music Conservatory. If interested, call the Conservatory at 568 7620.

May 12—Founder and Curator of the International Council for Women in the Arts Salwa Nashashibi will give a talk entitled "The Politics of Identity: Contemporary Arab Art in the US."

May 13—"East Meets West," musical duo of guitarist Jad Azkoul and oud player Sakher Hattar. In the American Center Courtyard, 7 pm.

Note: please reserve seats for all performances in advance at 592 0101, ext. 2579

## Films

■ Darat al Funun's Thursday evening film series will concentrate on Latin American artists for the month of May. The series kicks off with two films about Mexican artist Diego Rivera:

May 7—*The Frescoes of Diego Rivera*  
May 14—*Paint What I See*

Both films are at 6 pm  
■ At the French Cultural Center (Jabal Weibdeh):

May 11—*Le Dernier Metro* (1980) Francois Truffaut film that follows the difficulties a film director experiences as he attempts to continue his work in Nazi-occupied France. In French, with English subtitles. Two shows, 6:30 and 8:30 pm

## Exhibitions

■ Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan shows 99 new pieces entitled "A Suite of Heads" until 25 May at Darat al Funun.

■ Also at Darat al Funun, Lebanese/American artist and poet Etel Adnan's "Artist's Books of Art and Poetry" continues until 21 May.

■ At Instituto Cervantes: April 26—The exhibition "Symphony of colors" by Ecuadorian artist Olmedo Quimbata runs until May 12.



كيسا شح







## A GREENHOUSE FOR THE RICH?

## 'LEGS' FOR THE POOR

If Karl Marx had lived today, the title of his seminal work *Das Kapital* would probably have been *The Information*. With the rapid advances in communications and information technologies (IT), a whole new world opens up. It is a world where, as Harlan Cleveland pointed out in his May 1997 World Paper, *The Information Imperative*, where the dominant resource—information—tends towards glut, not scarcity.

An enormously important feature of IT is the potential for development it offers the poor of the world. It is powered by a basic resource—information—that is not in short supply.

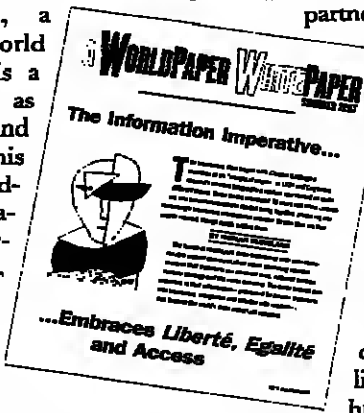
So far, the IT revolution has been supply-driven—innovation in search of applications. Just imagine what can be done if those applications respond more directly to the burning needs of the poor: distance education, tele-medicine and market information, for example.

There is significant potential in IT to promote sustainable development and to leapfrog some of the stages of economic development undergone by developed nations. In order for developing countries to leapfrog, however, they need the "legs." The sad fact is that most developing countries lack these legs. Without proper telephone and electrical networks, information poverty looms. As it stands, more than half the world's population has never made a phone call, and 2 billion people lack access to electricity.

Meeting the challenge of providing developing countries with these legs is an ethical as well as an economic imperative. It is also a formidable challenge. Conventional telecommunications and grid-based energy structures impose limitations, especially in rural areas, because of their cost. New technologies such as photo-voltaics have the potential to reduce these costs but, regardless of what technologies are used, a large investment will have to be made.

Where would the money come from?

There is no single source. Foreign direct investment to developing countries has increased in recent years, but most of these private capital flows are concentrated in a few nations such as China and bypass the least developed nations. This leaves public-private collaborations and partnerships.



A good start would be to connect a large number of community centers in rural areas to pilot programs for distance education, tele-medicine, etc. I believe the resulting burst of creativity and employment opportunities will speak for themselves.

Anders Wijkman,  
Former Deputy Administrator, United Nations Development Programme, Stockholm, Sweden

## COLD COMFORT

Continued from previous page

merged if levels rise by more than a meter, while others will be affected by the flooding of fields. Rising sea-levels also have the potential to change the coastal ecology, something that could in turn affect worldwide fish and prawn production.

Rice, the staple food for millions, is particularly vulnerable under this scenario. According to a study by the UN Environment Programme, rice production in Malaysia, for example, could fall by more than 20 percent over the next 30 years. Increasing salinity has already been tabbed as "the number one soil problem for rice-growing areas" by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, which coordinates the work of 16 international agricultural research centers worldwide.

The development of crops that can cope with salty water is therefore vital. Some progress is being made. The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), based in Manila, has identified the genes that control salt-tolerance. This opens the door to breeding rice

crops that can cope with salty water. And such work is vital even if the dangers of global warming prove to be overblown—crops that can grow in harsher conditions looks vital if the world's food output is to increase.

But such work is threatened by lack of money. Just over a year ago the

## A new place in the sun for some crops

Minimizing the impact of global warming on agriculture will be difficult—but not impossible. The key research priority is the breeding of crops that can combat stressful conditions such as drought and heat.

At the Ibadan-based International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Nigeria, scientists have developed maize varieties that are ready for harvest as green maize in 60 days rather than the normal 120 days. These new varieties not only grow more quickly—hopefully before drought strikes—they also yield more. Again, however, the IITA has had to lay off research staff because of cutbacks in aid.

In a warmer world, the root crop cassava is likely to play a more important role. Already a significant crop for around 500 million people in

Africa, Asia and Latin America, cassava stands up well to drought and can be stored in the ground for more than a year. This makes it a key crop in areas of very poor harvests or other emergency situations.

Research centers in Mexico and Syria are breeding varieties of wheat that can take the heat. In Syria, a variety of durum wheat has been developed that can grow in temperatures of over 40 degrees Celsius.

Among cereals, pearl millet is likely to be planted more widely. Compared with other cereals, pearl millet stands up well to drought. It also grows quickly even in poor soils. But, to date, it has largely been neglected by researchers.

—By John Mackay

IRRI, which is funded largely by Western countries, was forced to cut its staff almost in half because of reduced funding. Developing countries, for whom this work is most vital, often lack the money to support the research that is needed.

Meanwhile, the urgency grows. For

subsistence farmers—and especially for people who now face a shortage of food—lower yields caused by climate change promise economic losses, malnutrition and even famine, according to Rosenzweig and Hillel.

A warmer world, it seems, will likely be a harsher place for the hungry. ☐



At last count, **the world** didn't have any continents to spare.

The hard fact is that if high-yield farming techniques had never been developed, the world would need more farmland to feed its current population. And not just a little more, either.

We would have had to plow under the equivalent of Brazil.

And the United States.

And every single one of the 46 countries in Europe.

Of course, that would have meant destroying millions of acres of woodlands and other wildlife habitat—not to mention the wildlife itself.

Fortunately, thanks to high-yield farming, the world is quite capable of feeding a peak population of nearly ten billion people—on existing farmland. That's good news for everyone, because in a world of so many diverse species, there's just no land to spare.



## HIGH-YIELD FARMING

Feeding the world while preserving the land

www.admworld.com

## CEREAL BELT TIGHTENS

Continued from previous page

"If the US doesn't approve it, then it's going to be more difficult to expect any of the other countries to do anything," says Edward Hoyt, director general of EIC Consultants of Mexico. "It's not going to be lost on anybody that the biggest contributor is not taking part, so why should anybody else?"

Without a commitment from the US, Mexico will have to face the consequences. Gay suggests a possible mechanism by the FCCC to ensure that the US lives up to its responsibilities. "Those countries that are not in compliance would have to contribute to a fund in such a way that the degree to which their inaction is harmful to developing countries would be less harmful."

With the fund in place, countries like Mexico could borrow money from the fund in order to adapt (to effects of climate change) via technological renovation. Such a measure would address what Gay sees as a global inequity in countries' ability to deal with the impending consequences of human-influenced climate change, one of the primary objectives of the FCCC.

"The convention must seek that the damage is equitable, but it never is," says Gay. "An equitable [arrangement] would be that the developed countries, which are the main cause of the problem, create a safety net for the countries least able to confront the change. And they're not doing it." ☐

DANIEL C. SCHECHTER IS EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF THE MEXICO CITY-BASED MONTHLY MAGAZINE *Business Mexico*.

## THE WORLD PAPER

The World Paper appears as a special section in national newspapers and magazines around the world.

Editor-in-Chief  
Crocker Sower, Jr.  
Managing Editor  
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Published by  
World Times, Inc.  
40 World Trade Center  
Boston, MA 02201 USA  
Tel: (617) 435-5400  
Fax: (617) 435-5418  
e-mail:  
info@worldtimes.com  
Web site: www.worldpaper.com  
Volume XX, Number 5  
© World Times, Inc.

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# The Star's GUIDE

## Programs on JTV from 9—15 May

## ENGLISH PROGRAMS

**SATURDAY**  
 3:00—Holy Koran  
 3:10—Johnny Quest  
 3:30—1 Wana Be...  
 4:00—Neighbors  
 4:30—Ocean Wilds  
 5:00—French Program  
 6:00—Acropolis Boy  
 7:00—News in French  
 7:15—Discovery Magazine  
 7:30—News Headlines  
 7:35—You Bet Your Life  
 8:00—Cinema, Cinema  
 8:30—Prism  
 9:10—Streets  
 10:00—News At Ten  
 10:30—Feature Film: *A Brilliant Disguise*, starring: Lysette Anthony and Anthony John  
 12:00—Are You Being Served

**SUNDAY**  
 3:00—Holy Koran  
 3:10—The Pumpkin Patch  
 3:20—The Pink Panther  
 3:30—Skippy  
 4:00—The American Chart Show  
 5:00—In The Wild  
 6:00—French Program  
 7:00—News in French  
 7:15—A Tour in France  
 7:30—News Headlines  
 7:35—Life's most embarrassing moments  
 8:00—People and Places in Africa  
 8:30—Challenges  
 9:10—Renegade  
 10:00—News At Ten  
 10:30—Correlli  
 11:10—The Nanny

**MONDAY**  
 3:00—Holy Koran  
 3:10—Fred and Barney Show  
 3:30—Raiders of the South Pacific



NBA Games, Thursday at 5:00 pm.

4:00—Neighbors  
 4:30—Last Frontiers  
 5:00—French Program  
 7:00—News in French  
 7:15—French Programs  
 7:30—News Headlines  
 7:35—Hope and Gloria  
 8:00—Perspective  
 9:10—99-1 "Stone"  
 10:00—News At Ten  
 10:30—Law and Order  
 11:10—Bay Watch Nights

**TUESDAY**  
 3:00—Holy Koran  
 3:10—Pro Star

3:30—Small Talk  
 4:00—Bordertown  
 4:30—The Health Show  
 5:00—Route of Capricorn  
 6:00—French Program  
 7:00—News in French  
 7:15—French Programs  
 7:30—News Headlines  
 7:35—Step by Step  
 8:00—What would you do  
 8:30—Rhodes  
 10:00—News At Ten  
 10:30—Feature Film: *The Heart of the Killing*, starring: Tom Mason and Linda Blair  
 12:00—Metro Café

## Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): The Fifth Element
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): Casino
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Donie Brasco/ Titanic
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): She Is So Lovely/ Titanic
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Titanic
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): Fire Down Below
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Kamanana (Arabic)

## WEDNESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran  
 3:10—Mr Bogus Show  
 3:30—Oliver Twist  
 4:00—The Album Show  
 5:00—French Program  
 7:00—News in French  
 7:15—French Programs  
 7:30—News Headlines  
 7:35—Campus Cops  
 8:00—Envoy Special  
 9:10—Kung Fu  
 10:00—News At Ten  
 10:30—Nutcracker (Mini Series)

## Bel Air

8:00—Life on the Internet  
 8:30—The Brain "Evolution"  
 9:10—Babylon-5  
 10:00—News At Ten  
 10:30—Nutcracker (Mini Series)

## PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

**SAMEDI**  
 17:00—Faut pas rêver  
 19:00—Le Journal  
 19:15—Magazine  
 L'œuf de Colomb

**DIMANCHE**  
 18:00—Bonne espérance  
 19:00—Le Journal  
 19:15—Le Tour de France

**LUNDI**  
 17:00—Thalass  
 19:00—Le Journal  
 19:15—Variétés

**MARDI**  
 18:00—Les cœurs brûlés (2)  
 19:00—Le Journal  
 19:15—Magazine

**MERCREDI**  
 18:00—Ushuaia  
 19:00—Le Journal  
 19:15—E-M6

**JEUDI**  
 16:10—L'école des fans  
 19:00—Le Journal  
 19:15—Atomes crochus

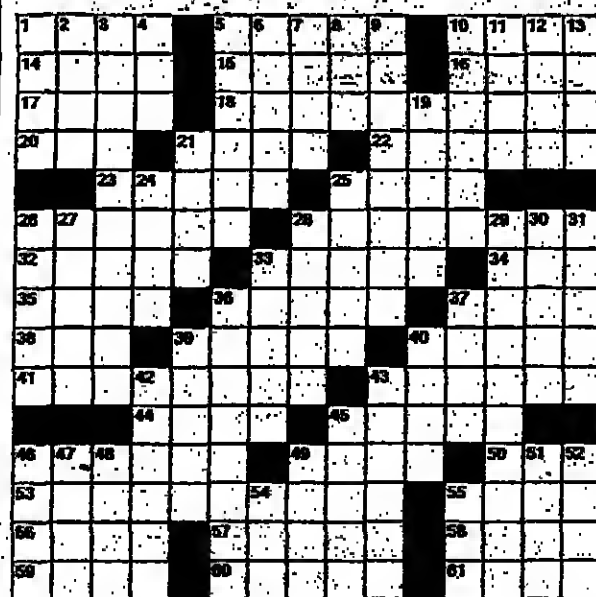
**VENREDI**  
 17:30—Fort Boyard  
 19:00—Le Journal  
 19:15—Magazine

Programs are subject to change by JTV

## Fashion

Valentino  
Autumn Fashion 1998-1999

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



**ACROSS**  
 1 Lady of rank  
 2 Devish  
 3 Garden item  
 4 Give approval  
 5 Crown of the crop  
 6 Flops  
 7 Holland sight  
 8 Pulls out the stops  
 9 For the money  
 10 Pecky plant  
 11 Queen of mystery  
 12 Show appreciation  
 13 Auctioneer's aim  
 14 Sedan shifter  
 15 Move with urgency  
 16 Fill with awe  
 17 Fischer's game  
 18 Bygone Midwest coalition  
 19 Love

**DOWN**  
 10 (old) Call up  
 11 Shine, for one  
 12 still  
 13 rustic  
 14 Puddle  
 15 hard (only)  
 16 Crowded meetings  
 17 Particular styles  
 18 Laid native  
 19 Certain Asian  
 20 Great relief  
 21 Dead plant  
 22 Kind of jazz  
 23 Gets a move on  
 24 Up to the task  
 25 Tide's partner  
 26 Court event  
 27 Professional changes  
 28 Scowled  
 29 Sound effects  
 30 Contest prize  
 31 House goit

26 Guile  
 27 Fear of  
 28 Magna cum  
 29 N  
 30 Bomback at  
 31 Intire  
 32 Objects  
 33 Bumper too-boo  
 34 Pencil  
 35 Musical  
 36 Home  
 37 Quarantine  
 38 Gasse group  
 39 "House"  
 40 (Delores)  
 41 At Sea  
 42 Indiana neighbor  
 43 Bayard  
 44 baby  
 45 Intire  
 46 Bread spread  
 47 Annoying  
 48 Current  
 49 Public display  
 50 Eloquent  
 51 Toward the stem  
 52 Eloquent

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## THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

**Weekly Tip:** Both Taurus and Aquarius are fixed signs. That means people will take longer to make decisions, and be less flexible about making changes.

**Aries (March 21-April 19).** Group activities may be thwarted due to lack of funds. Pool your imaginations and your talents to generate more income.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20).** You're stronger now, so don't let an older person push you around. Your team comes to your rescue. They bring you luck and plenty of help.

**Gemini (May 21-June 21).** Travel plans are hard to carry out but you can make final decisions. An older person wants the best for you.

**Cancer (June 22-July 22).** A friend gets rather pushy but it's a push in the right direction. Better study the language. Travel plans could materialize.

**Leo (July 23-Aug. 22).** You won't get away with much. Sell something valuable you don't use to get the money you need.

**Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Your good looks and charm could earn you free lunch. Accept acknowledgment for a job well done.

**Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Love should go very well, especially if you make a commitment. Your work dominates your life.

**Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Carefully consider your options before making decisions. Those decisions will be written in stone.

**Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** You're very good with technical assignments. Use a new tool to achieve success. Home is where the heart is.

**Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Pay travel expenses. Save whatever is left. You'll need it later. Postpone making a decision. You don't have enough information yet.

**Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** You're strong, but you'll need to be patient, too. The only changes accepted are ones that save money.

**Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20).** There are lots of hoops to jump through, but you're determined. Get a Virgo to help. Follow your hunches and abundance is your reward.

**If You're Having a Birthday This Week:** Your work could bring you lots of things this year, not the least of which is romance. Learn to deal with in the system this year and you'll never be bothered by it again.

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## PERKY &amp; BEANZ by Russell Myers



## ELWOOD by Ben Templeton &amp; Tom Forman



## CATFISH by Fred Wagner &amp; Tom Cone



## Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

YUDAG

SOMYS

TUNBOT

TYMINE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

ANSWER: WHAT A CLEANING LADY CAN COST.

ANSWER: GADY MOSSY BUTTON ENEMY

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## Words of Wisdom

You can't point a finger of blame if your hands are occupied with the task at hand.

Revenge proves only that you are equal. Rising above revenge proves that you are superior.

Do not mistake rudeness for strength; it is a weak imitation.

Powerful people are admired not for what they have, but what they can do without.

Encouragement of talent is the first step in creating it.

Keep your chin up in times of trouble — it helps in keeping your mouth closed.

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## Queider Trade markets new skin product

QUEIDER TRADE Establishment held a press conference Tuesday to offer its new product Phas, Hydra Blanc.

Ali Queider, general manager of the establishment, briefed the audience at Jordan Hotel about the benefits and high efficiency of the new product, together with Suad Morad, the cosmetics expert from Phas who also spoke about the effect of the product on the skin.

The new product is a hypoallergenic range of lightening and protective skincare with an active hydrating effect. It also offers Hydra Blanc for a corrective action, plus Hydra Blanc's special "extra," a hydrating action for an ideally beautiful skin.

With the Hydra Blanc range, the skin is more beautiful, not only because it is lighter-looking, but also because the moisture replenishes all its softness and translucence.

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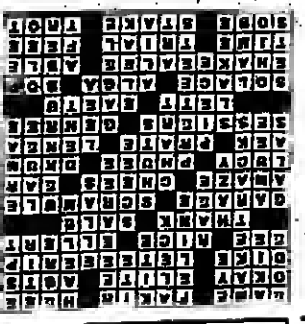
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## OFF THE WALL

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# Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Diplomatie

## L'Europe ou «la politique des pas feutrés»

Ce samedi, on commémore les débuts d'une Europe unie. L'idée a fait bien du chemin depuis et l'heure est aujourd'hui à la monnaie unique, au fameux euro. Une révolution, un dépoussiérage pour le Vieux Continent qui doucement étend son influence face au géant américain.

**Yves Gazzo** est un Européen convaincu. Presque un pléonaste quand on est le représentant de l'Union Européenne en royaume hachémite. Ce Français de 51 ans, aux origines italiennes et allemandes, revendique d'être au service de la fois de la Jordanie et des États membres. Il croit par conséquent que le pays du roi Hussein a tout à gagner à se rapprocher de l'Europe dans le droit fil de l'accord d'association (qui à long terme doit favoriser l'établissement d'une zone de libre-échange) signé en novembre dernier. Un accord de libéralisation économique qui n'est pas exempt de devoirs moraux.

**Le Jourdain :** La coopération entre l'Europe et la Jordanie est surtout centrée sur les échanges commerciaux. Le volet politique et culturel sera-t-il développé ?

**Yves Gazzo :** Il est effectivement plus facile de monter un programme de coopération ou d'investissement de 20 ou 30 millions d'euros. C'est plus visible que si vous organisez un échange entre des parlementaires européens et jordaniens. Des réflexions sont en cours notamment sur le problème de la sécurité, ainsi que des opérations culturelles ponctuelles mais dans ces domaines les idées ne peuvent être matérialisées du jour au lendemain.

**Le Jourdain :** Dans l'accord d'association, il y a tout un chapitre sur les Droits de l'Homme et le respect des li-

bertés fondamentales. Or aujourd'hui en Jordanie, la liberté d'expression est malmenée. Comment réagissez-vous ?

**Y. G. :** C'est vrai, le respect des Droits de l'Homme est inscrit dans la coopération. Ceci étant dit, il faut prendre en compte d'une part la philosophie des pays arabes. Ils nous disent : « Pourquoi nous imposer cette notion des Droits de l'Homme très occidentale alors que nous avons la charia qui prévaut à l'universalité ? ». De notre côté, nous demandons donc simplement l'application de la Déclaration universelle des Droits de l'Homme reconnue par les Nations Unies. D'autre part, il faut tenir compte des réalités. Dans le monde arabe, du roi Hassan à Saddam Hussein en passant par Afef Al-Hassad ou le roi Hussein, les dirigeants ont une durée de vie au pouvoir beaucoup plus longue qu'en Europe. C'est une évidence, une tradition avec ses côtés positifs, la continuité, et négatifs, un moindre dynamisme. Nous ne pouvons imposer un rythme et forcer les choses. Cependant nous avons à notre disposition des moyens de contrainte. Les accords



Yves Gazzo, chef de la délégation de la Commission européenne. (photo Shadin)

d'association prévoient qu'en cas de violation des Droits de l'Homme des mesures seront prises. Le Parlement européen a ainsi lancé des avertissements à la Tunisie, à Israël et à la Palestine sur le mode : « Nous sommes vigilants, et si vous ne redressez pas la situation, nous pourrions passer à des actions plus coercitives, comme réduire la coopération voire geler les accords d'association ».

**Le Jourdain :** La Jordanie est-elle sur la prochaine liste des punis ?

**Y. G. :** Non, il ne faut pas dramatiser. Il y a, c'est vrai, des cas de non liberté totale. Mais cela reste un pays où vous avez le droit à une justice, où les prisons ne sont pas des bagnes. Mais nous souhaitons qu'il n'y ait pas de régression trop forte. Il faut bien reconnaître que

## L'espion israélien qui campait pour la paix

«Ancien numéro deux du service secret israélien Mossad, David Kimkhi campe dans une «tente pour la paix» plantée près de la résidence du Premier ministre Benjamin Netanyahu à Jérusalem. C'est la première fois que je manifeste. Anaparavant, j'étais fonctionnaire astreint au devoir de réserve», explique-t-il devant la tente kaki où défile le gratin de l'intelligentsia israélienne. M. Kimkhi, qui a pris ses quartiers à 30 mètres de la résidence du Premier ministre, est pourtant loin d'être un «gauchiste». Aujourd'hui consultant économique international, il fut longtemps au Mossad puis directeur des Affaires étrangères sous le Premier ministre de droite Yitzhak Shamir. Mais il estime qu'il y a urgence devant les risques de violence dus au blocage du processus de paix. «Si le processus de paix s'effondre, la situation sera encore plus grave qu'avant les accords d'autonomie, car les Arabes n'y croiront plus», dit-il avant d'ajouter : «Mon expérience au Mossad m'a appris que la paix est parfois le meilleur moyen pour garantir la sécurité». Des intellectuels israéliens se donnent rendez-vous dans la «tente de la paix», où David Kimkhi veut rester jusqu'à demain. Une demi-douzaine de lits de camps ont été installés. «Nous voulons montrer à Netanyahu que le camp de la paix, ce ne sont pas quelques jeunes écrivains mais l'élite de notre pays», souligne Nafali Raz, un vétéran de la lutte contre l'occupation des territoires palestiniens et l'un des organisateurs de l'opération.

Décès de Nizar Kabbani

## La Femme et la Liberté en deuil

Le poète le plus populaire du monde arabe pensait que la libération sociale n'avait aucun sens sans libération sexuelle.



Nizar Kabbani, décédé d'une crise cardiaque, à l'âge de 75 ans, à Londres. Ici, avec sa seconde femme, Bilgis, disparue brutalement en 1981 dans un attentat. À la suite de cette tragédie, il lui consacra un poème, véritable ode à la Femme.

«Ainsi l'oiseau retourne dans sa maison...» Nizar Kabbani avait écrit dans son testament, rédigé dès 1977 après une grave crise cardiaque, d'être enterré à Damas. Ses vœux ont été exaucés. Cette semaine, plus de 10.000 personnes l'ont accompagné vers sa dernière demeure dans le cimetière familial où reposent ses parents et son fils, décédé à 24 ans. Il vient de retrouver Damas à jamais, cette ville fascinante dont il disait qu'elle était «la maîtresse qui lui a appris la poésie et la création et qui lui a offert l'alphabet du jasmin».

Sur le parcours funéraire, beaucoup de femmes, de tous les âges. Elles pleurent le poète disparu, le plus connu certainement dans le monde arabe et qui leur a consacré tant et tant de vers. Elles étaient sous inspiration vitale, à tel point qu'on le surnommait «le poète de la

femme». Chantre insatiable de leur douceur, de leur formidable influence, de leur corps aussi. En 1954, son premier recueil de poèmes, intitulé *Enfance d'une Poitrine*, fit scandale. Kabbani l'iconoclaste dénonçait le conservatisme et le machisme ambiants des sociétés arabes, y compris dans la littérature, en portant aux nues les courbes féminines. Malgré ses nombreux ouvrages, il fut imposé son style et par son modernisme réussit à moderniser la poésie arabe. «Il choisit très bien ses mots et ses figures de style», explique Nahed, une de ses lectrices assidues, comme on dit en arabe, le cœur accepte directement les mots de ses poèmes. Il n'y a pas besoin de réfléchir pour les comprendre». Glorificateur de l'amour, Nizar Kabbani fut aussi un poète engagé et même, journaliste à ses heures pour le quotidien Al-Hayat.

Diplômé de 1945 à 1965, il abandonna cette carrière trop compromettante pour fonder à Londres une maison d'édition destinée notamment à stigmatiser «le malaise politique arabe». Traumatisé par la déroute de 1967, il n'hésita pas à condamner ouvertement dans ses rimes la politique des dirigeants arabes : «Nos cris sont plus lourds que nos actions, nos sabres sont plus grands que nous : C'est notre tragédie». Chanté par les plus grandes voix d'hier comme Um Kalthoum, ses poèmes continuent d'être popularisés par les stars d'aujourd'hui, Majida Roumi ou Kazem Al-Saher. Parfois censuré mais souvent couronné par les hommes de pouvoir, Nizar Kabbani était le symbole incontestable et libérateur du romantisme arabe. ■

Le Jourdain

Culture

## L'arabe, une langue à digérer

L'Académie jordanienne de la langue arabe vient de lancer sa traditionnelle saison culturelle. Une XVème édition sur le thème «Comment maîtriser l'arabe ?» où les intervenants s'inquiètent des dangers de l'arabe parlé.



Dans cette publicité pour un café, l'arabe de la rue s'impose au détriment des règles de l'écrit. De quoi hérisser un académicien.

**Dès l'ouverture**, le président de l'Académie jordanienne de la langue arabe (AJLA), Abdul-Karim Khalifeh, est passé à l'offensive : «La politique d'éducation imposée dans les différents pays arabes est la responsable principale de la faiblesse de l'arabe moderne de l'heure actuelle». Il a souligné que le thème choisi cette année est d'une importance capitale pour les arabophones en général et pour ceux qui travaillent dans l'éducation en particulier.

L'AJLA fait participer des spécialistes des différents pays arabes afin d'affirmer encore l'unité d'une langue que se partagent l'ensemble des Arabes. Le premier conférencier Tamam Hassan, de l'Université

du Caire, a exposé «les fondements de la grammaire arabe et les moyens d'améliorer son enseignement». Outre les aspects techniques, le professeur a appelé à la formation des enseignants dans ce domaine et à accorder plus d'attention à la «conversation, la lecture, l'écriture et l'application linguistique» dans les livres scolaires. Il s'agit d'aider les élèves à mieux apprécier la langue arabe. Tamam Hassan a notamment incité au recours à des laboratoires linguistiques et a invité les médias à consacrer plus de temps à l'arabe littéraire.

Ce souci de rendre l'arabe plus accessible survient à un moment où l'on remarque une faiblesse presque généralisée de la maîtrise de la grammaire, de

la conjugaison et de l'écriture de la langue chez les jeunes générations. Les jeunes privilégiés de plus en plus les langues étrangères, en l'occurrence l'anglais et le français, tandis qu'une sorte de négligence est réservée à la langue maternelle. Il suffit de noter les noms donnés à certaines boutiques : «La Mode bonbon Anani» pour un magasin de vêtements ou «La Terrasse» pour un restaurant, entre autres...

Par ailleurs, depuis la modernisation de l'arabe dans les journaux et à la télévision, on assiste à une dérive où le langage parlé s'impose peu à peu et bafoue les règles de l'écrit. Récemment la revue publiée par le syndicat des restaurants remplaçait sans sourciller le «g» en langue littéraire par un «a», utilisé plutôt en langue parlée (voir illustration). Dans quelques annonces, on trouve l'expression «table lampe» écrit en caractère arabe ! Pourtant Abdul-Karim Khalifeh indique que l'Académie, en coopération avec d'autres académies des pays arabes, traduit les termes nouveaux. Il y a même un dictionnaire pour les termes industriels et technologiques. Exemple, le mot «fax» traduit en arabe par «nassukh» (copieur), des le début des années 80. L'AJLA a envoyé une circulaire aux médias et aux ministères pour qu'ils utilisent le mot arabe. En vain. Les académiciens de l'arabe estiment qu'une loi répressive, dite «loi de la langue arabe», est nécessaire pour punir les mauvais auteurs qui multiplient dans leur bouche les mots non arabes. Mais le problème est sans doute plus socio-culturel que juridique. ■

Suleiman Sweiss

Dans le cadre de la Saison culturelle de l'Académie de la langue arabe, six conférences sont encore prévues tous les samedis à 18h au siège de l'Académie, près de la Mosquée de l'Université de Jordanie à Jbeila : les 9, 16, 23 et 30 mai et le 6 juin. Pour tous renseignements, le numéro de l'Académie : 5343500.

Retrouvez le Jourdain  
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Médias

## La radio sur la voix de l'étranger

Avec l'arrivée de programmes en langue arabe venus de l'extérieur, le paysage radiophonique jordanien, notamment dans le traitement de l'information, s'est considérablement modifié. Sur la bande FM, on entend moins la voix de son maître.

**RMC, BBC, MBC.** Les auditeurs ont dû apprendre à jongler avec les sigles. Depuis plus d'un mois maintenant, la bande FM s'est en effet enrichie des programmes de radios venues de France, du Royaume-Uni et d'Arabie Saoudite. Pourquoi ont-elles choisi la Jordanie ? Parmi les nombreuses raisons avancées, les responsables citent la centralité géographique du royaume hachémite dans la région et son rôle clef dans l'évolution du processus de paix. Au ministère de l'Information, on prétend que «le climat démocratique de l'information pousse les radios et les télévisions étrangères à venir s'installer ici».

**Messages d'auditeurs.** Plus probablement, c'est de concurrence et de parts de marché qu'il s'agit. Dans un monde arabe peuplé de 250 millions d'habitants, les radios se livrent

à une lutte sans merci pour ne pas céder un pouce de terrain à l'adversaire. Ainsi la Jordanie s'est ouverte à la concurrence, en accueillant en automne dernier, sur sa bande FM, la radio saoudienne MBC dont les programmes dynamiques sont diffusés depuis Londres. Les radios internationales telles que RMC/Moyen-Orient (RMC-MO) et la BBC lui ont alors emboîté le pas. Il aurait été suicidaire de continuer à être diffusées uniquement sur les ondes moyennes, alors que MBC, la principale rivale, était épuisée en modulation de fréquence (FM) avec une qualité d'écoute nettement supérieure. RMC a d'ailleurs l'intention, selon Randa Habib, chef du bureau d'Amman, de poursuivre ce passage systématique sur la FM dans d'autres pays de la région et notamment dans le Golfe (des négociations sont en cours avec le Qatar).

Bref aujourd'hui en Jordanie, la bande FM n'est plus une grande plage brouillée interrompue par les seuls programmes de la radio d'Etat (en arabe, en anglais ou en français).

Cette nouvelle concurrence, cependant, ne semble pas inquiéter le directeur de la radio publique jordanienne, Hashem Kharrat. «Nous avons nos propres auditeurs qui sont ponctuels à nos rendez-vous radiophoniques et nous restons fidèles», répond-il, un peu agacé qu'on puisse évoquer une perte d'audience. Au département des programmes, les responsables se montrent plus prudents et admettent volontiers que les nouvelles radios les obligent à plus d'efficacité face à des auditeurs de plus en plus exigeants. «La radio jordanienne a sa propre politique et ses programmes sont toujours en évolution pour conserver son audience et de cette manière, être à la hauteur de la demande», souligne le directeur des programmes avec confiance. Faute de mesures de l'audience, il est encore difficile d'évaluer les nouvelles habitudes d'écoute de Jordaniens. Mais il suffit de se balader dans la rue ou de prendre le taxi pour constater qu'ils sont rarement branchés sur la radio nationale.

Selon un sondage récent réalisé par RMC-MO, les jeunes auditeurs seraient en train de construire un rapport plus étroit, plus affectif avec les stations. Du coup, Radio Monte-Carlo a mis à la disposition des auditeurs un répondeur sur lequel ils peuvent laisser des messages, passés ensuite à l'antenne. On retrouve une même volonté affichée d'«apprivoiser» l'auditeur, sur la BBC, qui dès 1938 lançait son service arabe sur les ondes moyennes. «Nous sommes



RMC-MO, reprise par Radio France Internationale (RFI), ambitionne de devenir la radio de référence en matière d'information.

bien sûr en concurrence permanente avec les radios arabes, les télévisions, explique le directeur des programmes en arabe, mais notre véritable défi, c'est de fidéliser les auditeurs et notre plus grand succès, d'avoir, parmi eux, des dirigeants des pays arabes». Une réussite basée sur l'impartialité et le sérieux de ses bulletins d'informations. Sa concurrence française revendique également cette réputation d'objectivité : «La popularité de RMC-MO se fonde sur l'objectivité, l'indépendance et le professionnalisme de l'information», assure Randa Habib.

Infos crébilles

Néanmoins le passage sur la FM ne risque-t-il pas de limiter la liberté d'information et de compromettre des radios étrangères ? Dans un entretien accordé au mensuel francophone Arabes, Jean-Paul Cluzel, président de RFI/RMC-MO, avoue que «lorsque se produisent des événements politiques sensibles, les pouvoirs locaux peuvent avoir tendance à arrêter

les émissions». D'où l'importance de conserver une capacité d'émissions en onde moyennes. «Pour cette raison, poursuit-il, notre émetteur à Chypre, nous est fort utile parce qu'il garantit notre indépendance».

Nombreux sont d'ailleurs les témoignages des auditeurs qui ont rejoint les infos des radios étrangères, au détriment des nouvelles trop formatées de la radio officielle : «Je suis fidèle à RMC parce que ses informations sont bien détaillées, sont crédibles. Cela répond à mon besoin d'être au courant des événements «chauds» qui se produisent dans la région», raconte un journaliste jordanien. Une étudiante est encore plus tranchante : «Je préfère écouter la BBC. Ses programmes sont toujours en avance par rapport à la radio jordanienne. La BBC a une grande indépendance politique alors que les informations présentées par les radios arabes sont contrôlées par les États».

Youssef Abu Saleh

مكتبة النهر



## Spike Lee gets beyond his game Ambitious sports film comes up short

By Stephen Hunter

HE GOT too much movie. That's the scoring total on Spike Lee's 'He Got Game,' which ultimately must be judged a mild disappointment. It's too jam-packed with subplots, suggesting an insane ambition to make not just the great American father-son basketball movie, but also the great American sports redemption movie, the great American domestic-violence movie, the great American exploitation-of-color-by-the-Man movie.

To its credit, the film does avoid the clichés of every single sports movie ever made: No come-from-behind, big-game win against improbable odds. It's not about sports as wish fulfillment, but sports as workplace culture and vernacular of physical expressiveness. It works at the altar of the game, and finds in the drive of men to basket a kind of body jazz of high art and total belief.

'He Got Game' focuses on the apex of that vast pyramid of aspiration, sweat, discipline and prayer that makes the whole system work, for better or worse: a young man who at 18 has 'got game' and how. He is that one-in-a-million, and as played by Milwaukeee Buck Ray Allen, Jesus Shuttlesworth is a super kid. He's got all the moves, can go to left or right hand with equal aplomb, hits from outside or floats through the ozone to the hoop, gets bigger as the clock gets smaller. But he's decent, too, and has taken on the responsibility of raising his younger sister.

It's to Allen's great credit that he's able to make this paragon seem even remotely human. He makes us see that Jesus still has a soul. He clings to the shard of his shattered family—his sister (Zelda Harris) and her ultimate god—whatever lies ahead for him must include her.

But Lee's view of this young man's dilemma is less moving than it might be. What we see is an embarrassment of riches, an abundance of possibility. It must indeed be difficult to have so many folks wanting a piece of you, but how common a problem can this be? While Lee makes it sometimes quite amusing—Jesus' visit to a fast-talking agent's palatial spread is the comic high point of the movie—it's not the sort of drama to which one can make an empathetic connection, which is why there are so few masterpieces about prosperous people. Their lives may be just as painful as ours but, really, who cares?

Rather, the emotional core of the film is an Oedipal drama between Jesus and his father.

Jake (Denzel Washington), a convict who is released from jail for a brief time after having made a Faustian deal with the Man; he will try and press his son into playing for 'Big State,' the governor's alma mater. If he gets the son's signature on a letter-of-intent, his time in prison will be significantly lessened. But given the nature of his crime, it's preposterous that he'd be the one sent to try and bring this off—after all, Jake killed Jesus' beloved mother.

Washington's Jake is the movie's best performance, but it's also the movie's biggest problem. He makes us feel the father's pain and yearning for some rapprochement with the son he knows he's failed. That much is real, but little else is. We never learn a thing about him, we never see him deal with the crime he committed and he never understands that his coaching of the son was alcohol-fueled and close to abusive.

Washington is so good he almost gets away with it. It helps enormously that he's got some game, too, so that when in the film's best dramatic sequence father and son go one-on-one, it's Washington's athletic skills that make the scene work.

Here, the story becomes infused with larger significance. What we witness isn't just a little one-on-one, it's an epic confrontation between the generations in a primal arena, the stakes fantastically high.

But why does Jake become involved with the prostitute (Milla Jovovich) next door in his cheap hotel? Why does Lee waste so much time evoking the parole officer's Spivey (Gary Sinise) and Crispin (Joseph Lyle Taylor), and then do nothing with them? Why does the movie have so many

holes in it? 'He Got Game' does have one fabulous sequence. It's early, during and after the credits, a kind of tour of the landscape of American basketball, set to the mythic-poetic grandeur of Aaron Copland's most self-consciously American music.

Everybody got game: the home-boys elbowing for space to work their magic above the city asphalt, the lanky farmers' sons tossing in long jumpers in the barnyard, the little boys and girls who can't shoot or dribble but can play. All are majestic against light, wide skies and the sense of space and freedom that is this country.

This sequence, somehow, makes the poetry of basketball seem a national treasure. It's the purity of beauty and the beauty of purity all in the arc of a ball toward an orange hoop hung 10 feet above the surface of the planet.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Never had a date, but can sing about heartbreak

## Country starlet wise beyond her years

By Robert Hilburn

LOS ANGELES—It's one of those Southern California days after a heavy rain, when the sky is so blue and the air so fresh at the beach that it is almost too beautiful to be true—and teen-age country music star LeAnn Rimes is caught up in it.

"I think I could learn to love this," she says cheerfully, standing on a narrow side street in the Venice area of Los Angeles while crew members check the lighting for the shooting of the video for her new single, "Commitment." "I never really understood what people liked about Los Angeles, but this is awesome. It's cool."

The terms "awesome" and "cool" may tip off Rimes' teen status, but there is little else about her to remind you that she doesn't yet qualify for a driver's license. Certainly not her success: the 15-year-old Mississippi native with the big, booming voice has enjoyed the most spectacular rise of any teen country or pop artist in history.

With her fourth album, appropriately titled "Sittin' on Top of the World," due in stores Tuesday, Rimes has already sold an estimated \$150 million worth of albums worldwide—far outstripping any two-year performance by such youthful sensations as the Jackson 5 in the '60s or New Kids on the Block in the '80s.

Since arriving on the pop scene in 1996 with "Blue," a single on which she sings with a power and character reminiscent of the late Patsy Cline, Rimes has performed more than 200 concerts, seeing her grosses escalate to an average of \$200,000 a night.

While her old classmates back in Dallas were still working their way through freshman English, she won Grammys in 1996 for best new artist and best female country vocal, co-wrote a semi-autobiographical novel, *Holiday in Your Heart*, and starred in a version of the book that ran as an ABC-TV "Movie of the Week."

And her co-manager, Lyle Walker, says Rimes is just warming up. Besides scheduling some 100 more concert dates this year, she has recorded a song, "Looking Through Your Eyes," for the Warner Brothers animated movie "Quest for Camelot." There's also talk about her acting in a movie next year, and possibly a Broadway play beyond that.

Understandably, all this activity



Country singer LeAnn Rimes has sold \$150 million in albums, won two Grammys, co-written a novel and starred in a TV movie. photo by Wally Skaff

invites concern about too fast a pace.

Stardom is difficult at any age, but especially for someone 15. Nashville remembers all too well Tanya Tucker, the last teen queen of country, whose fast-lane excesses were documented in a 1997 autobiography titled "Nickel Dreams."

"We worry and we try to be very protective," says Walker, a former tax lawyer. "If we see things moving too fast, we'll call time out and shut down things for a while so she can smell the roses."

Jimmy Bowen, one of Nashville's most powerful executives for years, thinks those around Rimes may be deceiving themselves. He feels that being thrust into show business at an early age is so dangerous that he refused to sign Rimes four years ago, despite marveling at her voice during an audition.

"I just wouldn't sign a child," says Bowen. "I would be too concerned with what this business would do to her personal life. It looks like [Rimes'] advis-

ers are doing an incredible job with LeAnn, but we don't know now what price is being paid for all she's going through ... and I guarantee you she'll pay one."

For Rimes, all the talk about her age is frustrating. "One of the hardest things for me is having people look at you and say, 'Oh, she's such a cute little kid,'" Rimes says on the set of the video. "I understand why people say that. ... You only expect so much from someone 15, much less 13 when 'Blue' came out. But I don't call myself a teen-ager. I call myself a businesswoman."

"In a lot of ways, she's still a 15-year-old girl. ...," says Rod Essig, her agent at the Creative Artists Agency. "On another level, she's 15 going on 30. The voice is a gift, but she also has an instinct for where she wants to be with her career."

Others who work closely with Rimes and who have watched her from a distance agree that she is an ambitious and driven performer, one who is deeply

involved in all career decisions. "LeAnn is pushing us all," says Essig. "She's tremendously goal-oriented."

Though Walker won't reveal how much money Rimes is worth, she's probably nearing contention for Forbes magazine's annual list of the 40 wealthiest entertainers. She is possessed of a maturity and confidence that makes you understand why her advisers think she can handle herself.

One of the favorite twists to virtually every article about Rimes after the success of "Blue" was how the 13-year-old girl who sang the heartbreak tale had never even been out on a date.

Well, Rimes says, she has now dated and, like any teen-ager, she enjoys flirting. But she is worried about relationships—not just the familiar issue of a star worrying whether someone is just attracted by her fame and wealth. She's thinking ahead—to what a relationship might do to her image.

"The people I do go out with are 19 and up because they are the ones I can relate to ... and I think that's going to cause problems because I'm in the public eye and people are going to see that as odd. They'll go, 'What's that little girl doing going out with that man?'"

Despite the fact that her parents are divorced, Rimes says she remains close to both. She lives with her mom—they've just built a new house in Nashville—and she is usually joined on the road by her dad.

"It was very traumatic," Rimes says of her parents' split.

"It was one of the hardest things I've ever been through. But things have gotten better. ... I am very close to both of my parents." Sometimes, she admits, even she is overwhelmed by everything going on around her.

"People are pulling at you every minute. ... Interviews, TV shows," she says. "When you have an album coming out, you have to figure out what you want the cover to look like."

"I know some artists aren't like this, but I want to be involved in everything I do."

Rimes pauses, perhaps concerned that it sounds as if she's complaining. "I don't think of my life as just this series of problems," she says. "I know I'm lucky. ... I get to do exactly what I want to do in life. ... How bad is that?"

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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## THE STAR'S WORK COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NOTES

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Apple makes a comeback, announcing profits and alliances:

### The state of the Mac

AMIDST THE achievements and setbacks that Apple Computer Inc. has faced in the course of the past year or so, it seems that the company is stabilizing, with announcements of profits in the last two quarters (ending December 1997 and March 1998).

This is good news for Macintosh users worldwide, who have been concerned about the fate of their favorite machine. From the looks of it, the Macintosh is here to stay, as figures show that it is making a comeback and growing in terms of user-base.

Some interesting figures on the actual state of the Macintosh platform were announced by research company, DataCorp.

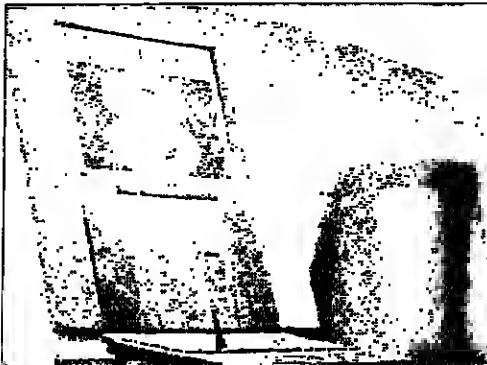
The research shows that Apple Macintosh holds a 4.6 percent market share worldwide, which resembles a drop from its once stronger 9.6 percent in 1993.

That means there has been a drop of almost 50 percent in the past four-and-a-half years.

Although this is a source of worry, Apple believes that its worst days are behind as the Apple Macintosh is gaining market share once again, thanks to an aggressive pricing strategy and better targeting in corporate sectors which traditionally selected IBM PC compatibles.

At the center of this growth is a new policy of wide-spanning alliances which secures the future of the

Apple Macintosh platform. Microsoft's announcement last year that it had invested in Apple Computer Inc., in addition to the company's commitment to continue to produce the latest versions of its software for Macintosh have contributed to this sense



of enthusiasm.

Also, a recent announcement of an agreement with Hewlett-Packard, by which the giant printer manufacturer will support Macintosh operating system compatibility in its upcoming printer models, has further emphasized the fact that the Macintosh may be down, but definitely not out.

Share prices for Apple Computer have been rising, especially with recent announcements of earnings.

The Macintosh market is significant enough for most players in the software and hardware accessories industries to retain Mac-focused strategies as part of their policies.

Research in Europe, by a

company called Context, has found that Apple Macintosh holds a 3.5 percent share of the personal computer market. This seems fair, but is somewhat dwarfed when compared to the 15.1 percent shares held by Compaq Computer and IBM—but then, these companies are the largest PC vendors in the world.

In the personal computer market, Dell and Hewlett-Packard are also ahead of Apple with market shares of 6.7 percent and 5.8 percent respectively.

Strongholds which the Macintosh enjoys are in the publishing and education markets, which have remained faithful to the Macintosh platform throughout the past decade.

This is a sign that the Macintosh still enjoys superiority in these fields, from a technical point of view.

Of course, Apple needs to guard its position and grow in these fields, without losing focus on corporate and home markets.

The home-user market, in particular, is receiving much more attention from Apple as the company has introduced low-end Macintosh models which pack power at competitive prices.

This comes after many years during which Apple witnessed a gradual withdrawal from the home personal computer market. ■

A set of steps, incorporated by a Task Force to counter the Year 2000 problem (Part 2):

### Every business leader is involved

By Samer Abu Libdeh

THE BUSINESS community in Jordan looks forward to the beginning of a new century with optimism. As we draw closer to this historic milestone, the anticipation of a growing number of business owners and managers, here and around the world, is rapidly turning into apprehension. They are confronted with the possibility that their computer systems and global networks may fail because of an inability to interpret calendar dates beyond 1999. The implications of the Year 2000 computer problem—or the "millennium bug"—are extremely serious and may occur in every aspect of business operations. The countdown has started, and the deadline cannot be postponed.

No business is immune, every firm is affected—either directly, by its own operations, or indirectly, by the action or inaction of others. The supply chain of Jordan's economy is clearly vulnerable.

The Task Force for the Year 2000 has been formed to address this problem and provide a set of recommendations to be considered by business leaders and the government.

The Task Force for the Year 2000 will make additional information it has produced available to general industry. This information will include CEO perspectives on the Year 2000 challenge, advice on contingency planning, and a check list for small and medium-sized enterprises and guidance for directors. It will also include links to related Internet sites.

This material is primarily addressed to business execu-

tives and business owners.

Recommendations to be considered (Part 2 continued from last week):

**Recommendation 6:**

National, provincial and regional associations should immediately take on a more pro-active role in awareness and support campaigns aimed at achieving Year 2000 preparedness. Initiatives taken should be publicly reported.

**Recommendation 7:**

A Business Council on National Issues should address the Year 2000 challenge. The focus of such a bilateral initiative would be on mission-critical economic sectors and issues.

**Recommendation 8:**

1) All businesses, in their public communications and marketing campaigns, should promote the implementation of the recommendations formulated by the Task Force to both private and public sector authorities, and aggressively reach out to the various components in the supply chain as a demonstration that they are preparing for the Year 2000 challenge and are expecting the same involvement from trading partners.

2) All national media should continue to address and communicate issues that are related to Year 2000 preparedness in Jordan.

**Recommendation 9:**

All levels of government should require their lending bodies/ programs to make the existence of a formal Year 2000 action plan a condition

for securing grants, contributions, loans and loan guarantees, where applicable.

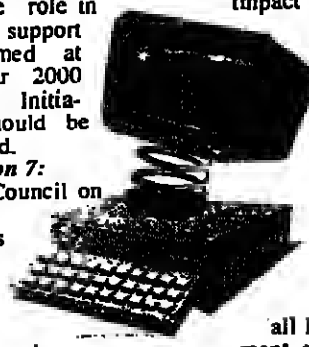
**Recommendation 10:**

Before introducing legislation or regulatory changes, all levels of government should consider the impact they may be effecting in terms of re-programming information systems and diverting resources away from Year 2000 preparedness.

**Recommendation 11:**

Regulators at all levels of government should complete, by July 1, 1998, an assessment of the impacts that the Year 2000 computer failures would have on their objectives, in their regulated industries. Also, they should revise—where appropriate—their compliance assessment procedures and exert—wherever possible—moral persuasion on the importance of Year 2000 preparedness.

Jordanian legislative bodies should hold public hearings, inviting national or regional associations, relevant government authorities and others able to exert influence on the private sector, to report on their efforts to encourage their constituents to meet the Year 2000 challenge with formal action plans. The Task Force report and recommendations should be brought to the attention of the Prime Minister and prominent members of the private sector. ■



## INTERFAH

'Cyber Souq'? Why not?

SOMETIMES I wonder why it is that our computer market never witnesses new and innovative events!

Has anyone ever thought, for example of organizing a special Shopping Season or Festival for computer products, in which all companies are invited to display their hardware and software, at lower than the usual prices, all in one place, which is as accessible to the public as a "flea market"—also known to us in Jordan as "Souq Al Eitmayn."

Really, I think somebody needs to pick up on this idea, which has a proven success record in neighboring countries.

Many people might have pondered this notion at one time or another, although as yet none have put it into action!

For some reason, the Jordan Computer Society (JCS) doesn't initiate this kind of idea and neither do entrepreneurs, although there is a dire need for a single comprehensive source of computer equipment and supplies which opens for a limited number of days or weeks, once or twice a year.

You could call it Souq Al Combyoutur Al Sha'bee, meaning the Popular Computer Market.

A refined manifestation of this idea is what took place during the Dubai Shopping Festival in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Computer product suppliers all got together and decided to turn a main road in Dubai (Khaled Bin Al Waleed Street) into Cyber Street, decorating it and setting it up in a way that offered an amazing world of walk-through bargain shops and stalls.

In fact, they expected it would bring in as much sales as the GITEX Shopper's Show—a major event which breaks records—and it did.

For around a month, the street glittered and show-cased all the best in end-user computer hardware and software products. It was interesting to note how much educational and home-use software was sold! That should say something to all our local companies, who seem to be having difficulties getting their home software products across to a family audience.

So, maybe we need a Cyber Street event in Jordan, to get our computer sector moving and to restore the enthusiasm in the end-user market!

Some would joke and say that we already have our Cyber Street in Amman, referring to Wasfi El Tai (Gardens) Street, which is full of computer and information technology companies of all sizes!

Of course, this helps, although it does not really resemble the idea. The point is to create a seasonal event, which is well timed to coincide with buying seasons as far as computer products are concerned. It could take the form of an open-air event, in the Spring or Summer, somewhere in an open area—for example, in one of Amman's commercial districts (Jabal Al Hussein, Sweifiyeh, Wasfi El Tai Street ... etc). Or it could be an inside event, organized very much like an exhibition, but with on-the-spot sales being the central theme.

Jordanian computer users will anticipate these events, and save up for them. Computer distributors and resellers will plan their schedules and inventory in such a way as to be able to provide excellent price discounts, and everybody will be pleased.

Of course, getting an event like this in motion will require cooperation from the proper authorities, especially if it's an outdoor event. This could be in the form of making the process easier, exercising flexibility in terms of arrangements involved, reducing licensing requirements or fees to a minimum and facilitating every other issue involved, in order to ensure its success. The Jordan computer market isn't asking for a nationwide shopping festival, we just want to insure that a micro-shopping festival would be a success.

After all, we're all on the same team: we want our computer market to grow and prosper, especially to the benefit of Jordan's overall economy. ■

### News update

**Gateway removes '2000' from its name**

● Gateway, a top PC vendor, announced that it has dropped the "2000" suffix from its name, after using it throughout the eighties and most of the nineties as part of its brand.

The company believes that this is a natural move as the millennium approaches. After all, Gateway's technical achievements will have surpassed the year 2000.

Gateway intends to launch a

worldwide campaign to promote its adjusted brand, with some new ideas, but the company doesn't intend to drop its traditional image of black and white spots, based on the patterns of Holstein cow skin.

**Microsoft reluctant to confirm Windows 98 release date**

● It seems that Microsoft is not specifically stating whether or not its latest operating system, Windows 98, is to be launched on the sched-

uled date of 25 June 1998.

This may be related to the fact that Windows 98 crashed, as Bill Gates, CEO of Microsoft, was giving a pre-announcement of the operating system. What is certain, as Gates said, is that Windows 98 will be out in "a few months."

These uncertainties come at a time when Microsoft is still facing the prospects of law suits filed by anti-trust commissions in the US, regarding Microsoft's dominance of the computer industry.

## Sporty 200 increases appeal of Rover range

THE SPORTY, agile Rover 200 has been launched in Jordan by the Jordan Automobile Company (JAC).

Manufactured by Britain's largest car manufacturer, Rover Group, the Rover 200 is the latest car to bear the distinctive Rover badge, adding a young, dynamic and sporty vehicle to the range of Rover 800 and 400 vehicles already available in Jordan.

Rover International's Middle East Regional Director Ken James said, "Rover Group is delighted that our partner in Jordan, the Jordan Automobile Company, has expanded the range of Rover cars in the Kingdom, thereby introducing the brand to a new generation of customers."

Rover has been at the forefront of automobile production since the start of the century, developing and refining an appearance unique to the company. The new Rover 200 series offers drivers new visual flair more significant than any previous Rover, with a low sporting stance and aggressive profile to underline its overall performance and quality.

Powered by the award-winning K-series engine, the 1.4 liter sixteen-valve Rover 200 offers exceptional performance with impressive fuel economy.

Outstanding agility is another essential ingredient of



the Rover 200's appeal, with ingenious engineering and a torsion beam (H-frame) suspension that allows for excep-



tional handling and a very smooth ride.

The interior of the new Rover 200 reflects the grace and exhilaration of the exterior.

with special trim materials and colors adding detail to the fascia, door casings and seats, along with a notably high "feel-good" factor.

Safety is paramount throughout all Rover cars, with top priority on primary and secondary safety, and testing well beyond mandatory legislation. Standard on the Rover 200, twin airbags are provided along with front seatbelt pretensioners, which work in combination to give the ultimate protection. Side intrusion beams have also been placed in all doors to ensure maximum side impact protection.

Nihad Zacharia, managing partner of JAC said, "The Rover 200 is a superb addition to a family of cars of exceptional quality and ability. An entry level vehicle to the wide range of Rover cars, it nevertheless offers the performance and safety synonymous with the Rover name."

Rover provides a range of automobiles to suit all motoring requirements, from utility vehicles to family cars, all of which are suitable for use around the world. Whether a 4x4 vehicle or a luxury saloon car, Rover represents a classic yet definitive style. ■



IT'S OK TO STARE. REALLY.

Once you've caught sight of the new Rover 200 Series, it's hard to take your eyes off it: those curves demand attention.

The design is graceful, yet full of purpose. It looks stunning from any angle; and different from any Rover you've ever seen before. It's meant to be. We set out, quite simply, to create a Rover like no other.

A Rover which would surprise everyone with its dynamic, youthful looks.

Looks which promise you an almost indecent amount of fun. Not do its good looks stop outside. Open the door and you can see the graceful curves echoed in the cabin; in the soft, rounded forms of the fascia and doors.

The driver's seat wraps snugly around you, the instruments are clear and logical. Rover styles went to great lengths to create an environment which offers as much pleasure to be in as it does to be seen in.

SERIES 200

ABOVE ALL, IT'S A ROVER.

The Jordan Automobile Company  
Telephone 4651371

<http://star.arabia.com>  
ONLINE